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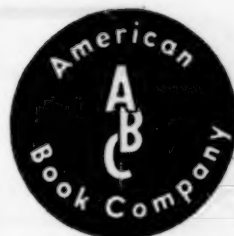
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The Poetry of Wallace Stevens

ELDER OLSON

WALLACE STEVENS has been thought of as primarily a poet of ideas, and his poems have been discussed chiefly as forms of philosophic statement. Viewed as a philosopher, he is no more satisfactory than T. S. Eliot: his ideas are few, his problems are among the most hackneyed ones of epistemology and metaphysics, his doctrines are equally familiar, and his arguments are unconvincing. We begin with what is surely one of the most original and, within limits, rich and various poets of our day, and end up with a philosopher who, to say the least, does not possess these qualities. This startling transformation of a good poet into a bad philosopher suggests that criticism has gone off the rails somewhere, or perhaps was headed in the wrong direction at the start.

Stevens is a poet of ideas, if you will, but in poetry ideas function very

differently from the way in which they do in science, philosophy, or ordinary discourse. Ideas have an emotional as well as an intellectual dimension. The faculties of the mind are distinguishable in thought but not in fact; they are involved in constant and subtle interplay, and whether we respond to idea or to sensation, we respond with the whole fabric of the soul. When Milton sets Hell before us, he does not merely cause us to connect certain ideas; he plays powerfully upon our emotions, and he does so not merely through ideas but through images which he summons up in our imagination.

Perhaps the human mind cannot conceive ideas without framing images, or entertain images without conceiving ideas; but we tend to disregard one or the other, according as our concern is intellectual or emotional. In science the image exists for the sake of the idea, and is unimportant except as it conveys or fails to convey the idea; in poetry the case is opposite. For example, if you think the idea *triangle*, you make a mental picture of it; if your concern is intellectual, it does not matter what sort of triangle you picture, red or blue, small or large, right, scalene, or equilateral, for you disregard the special character of the image and go on to the

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idea. But if your concern is with ideas in their emotional aspect, the image is more important than the idea, for what we actually imagine affects us more powerfully than something we merely conceive. Indeed, emotions are produced in us far more frequently by sensation and imagination than by ideas in themselves; the latter affect us only when we have some settled emotional or moral attitude toward them.

An idea need only be clear and adequate; an image must be emotionally potent; it must evoke at least pleasure or pain, and through the special character of its pleasurable or painfulness it evokes particular emotions. Ideas can be connected affirmatively or negatively, but images cannot; whatever the imagination contemplates it contemplates as conjoined. Thus when Stevens tells us that pears are not nudes or bottles or viols, the intellect understands that they are not, but the imagination sees them as if they were, and has its own moment of dominion. Finally, whereas the rational operations of the intellect can be stated as argument, the processes of the imagination cannot; they can be stated, if at all, only in terms of interaction between images and emotions. For example, I am in a gloomy frame of mind, and my imagination supplies one dismal image after another; or I entertain a series of cheerful images and become cheerful.

I discuss these matters at some length because they are, I think, crucial to an understanding of most poetry, and of Stevens' in particular. A poet of ideas he may be; but I can think of no one else who seems to suffer so badly from logical paraphrase. For he operates chiefly through images, and it is these we must study if we are to grasp his poems. Perhaps I can make all this

clear by considering an early and simple, yet in many respects typical, poem, *Life Is Motion*:

In Oklahoma
Bonnie and Josie
Dressed in calico
Danced around a stump.
They cried,
"Ohoyaho,
Ohoo,"
Celebrating the marriage
Of flesh and air.

In its logical aspect, this poem can be viewed as proof by example of the thesis stated in its title. Poetically, however, truth of thesis or adequacy of proof is here unimportant. What is important is that a certain image is presented in a certain way, and that our emotions are affected accordingly. If we examine the image which arises in our minds, and then examine the poem, one of the first things that strikes us is that the image is much more complex and full than the poem, and that a good deal of it has no logical justification in the poem. We imagine two little girls, in an ecstasy of joy; they wear quaint, stiff, "dutchy" dresses home-made out of calico flour-sacking; they cry out shrilly as they dance with clumsy abandon around a stump, against a background of farm land. We cannot logically prove all of this from the poem. Oklahoma contains cities and oil-fields as well as farms; Bonnie and Josie may as well be the names of old women as of little girls; dances may be graceful as well as clumsy, and so on. Yet I daresay no one would imagine here two decrepit old women or two languid sirens moving against a background of buildings or oil-fields.

We ought not to read anything and everything into poetry; but also we ought not to concentrate on the bare

words of a poem and leave out what the human intellect, imagination, and emotion are likely to make of them. Look at this poem line by line, and see what the imagination does at each point. The first two lines contain no images, but they do contain elements that may modify images. The third line gives us an image of two little girls in calico; the two little girls are suggested by feminine diminutive names, simply because that is our most immediate association with such names and because nothing conflicts with it, and "Oklahoma" now joins with "calico" to suggest home-made dresses of print flour-sacking. So far the imagination sees them side by side, motionless and without particular expression; the fourth line sets them in motion, arranges them at opposite sides of the stump, fills them with joy, and summons up a farm background. The fifth tells us merely that they cried, and although Mr. Empson would doubtless tell us that "cried" may also mean "wept," the imagination is in full course, and such a meaning never enters our heads. Indeed, their shrill, meaningless, and vigorous cries are necessary in the next two lines because silence here would disturb the image of childish joy which is being built up in our minds. The last two lines suddenly, surprisingly, give us the cause of the dance, and we understand why the cries had to be meaningless, even barbaric: the joy they express is ageless and primitive, the joy of life itself, of life which is motion.

Simple as it is, this poem is rigorously contrived. Its lines cannot be rearranged, for instance, even where their grammar would allow; they are ordered to steer the imagination upon a certain course, to make it do certain things and to keep it from doing cer-

tain others. Words of less determinate association appear first: "Oklahoma" and "calico" give us country, but at "stump" farm country springs up; "dance" gives us motion, but the rhythm of the line gives us the character of the dance. Substitute "round" for "around" and the line smoothes out to suggest a more measured and graceful motion; "around" gives it a hopping character.

The poem consists of an image and an insight. The image had to be only definite enough to convey a certain impression, and the poet had two problems with it: to give materials which the mind could supplement so as to form, on its own, that impression, and to suppress any element—of the pathetic or the ridiculous, for instance—which could disturb that impression. That is, the girls had to be presented as joyful with no special reason for joy, without being in the least made pathetic or absurd. We frame an image which we view with amused indulgence, just such as we should feel if we saw the girls in reality; at that very moment we are given an insight into the cause of the girls' behavior—an insight which immediately changes our attitude toward them. They are no longer simply two quaint little girls having a good time; they are embodiments of an eternal and mysterious energy and joy. The insight is the poet's, to be sure, but his art makes it ours also, because we are forced to interpret the metaphor of "the marriage of flesh and air" in order to arrive at it.

Consider another typical poem, *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*:

Call the roller of big cigars,
The muscular one, and bid him whip
In kitchen cups concupiscent curds.
Let the wenches dawdle in such dress

As they are used to wear, and let the boys
 Bring flowers in last month's newspapers.
 Let be be finale of seem.
 The only emperor is the emperor of ice-
 cream.

Take from the dresser of deal,
 Lacking the three glass knobs, that sheet
 On which she embroidered fantails once
 And spread it so as to cover her face.
 If her horny feet protrude, they come
 To say how cold she is, and dumb.
 Let the lamp affix its beam.
 The only emperor is the emperor of ice-
 cream.

This differs from the foregoing in that whereas in the former we had, in the perception of the two girls, the cause of the poet's state of mind, we have here the effects of it: he says what he says because he feels revulsion at the conventional notion of the dignity of death, the old idea that Death is the king of kings, the only true emperor. On the contrary, life is king; it stops for no one; and let no one pretend that it stops for the dignity of death. The notion that death dignifies poor as well as rich is absurd; here is the poor old woman, dead; what is her dignity? These reflections, and the feelings which they evoke, impel him to utter a series of orders as cynical and brutal as the real attitude of the living toward the dead. First of all, the wake is the thing, and the dead person merely gives occasion for it; the funeral is unimportant. Indeed, the first stanza is so far from containing any hint of death that it might deal with preparations for a rather dubious party. We become aware of a death only with the word "face," well on in the second stanza. "Concupiscent curds" are to be prepared rather than the funeral baked meats and custards; the "wenches" are to don, not mourning, but their usual dress, and they do not desist

from work through grief, but "dawdle"; the boys are to bring, not bouquet and wreath and flowers sedately boxed, but flowers in old newspapers. A crude and vulgar life goes on despite the corpse in the bedroom. In the second stanza the poverty of the dead woman is intimated by the cheap dresser with missing knobs, her age by her "horny feet." She is to be covered, not with a white sheet, but one on which she had once embroidered fantails (probably fan-tailed and gaudy-colored birds), even though it may be too short; she is covered, not out of decency, but for a gayer reason. Suppose her feet protrude, they can only indicate how little she has to do with the warm and noisy life going on in the kitchen.

I have said that these poems are typical of Stevens' art. We may now consider generally what that art is. In the first place, *Life Is Motion* and *The Emperor of Ice-Cream* are not "about" two little girls and a dead old woman. Girls and woman are present in these poems, not as characters proper, but as objects of someone's thought, although they occupy the center of the stage, and his thoughts and feelings are intimated only through what is said about them. That "someone"—possibly Stevens himself—is the constant character, however fantastically disguised at times, of Stevens' poetry: even in *Sunday Morning*, the poem is not about what a woman thinks, but about what someone thinks and feels about what she thinks. Let us suppose, for simplicity's sake, that that character is Stevens.

I think there are no poems involving an exciting external situation, or the drama of a tremendous moral choice, or violent and immediate passion. On

the contrary: he seems perpetually aloof, always at one remove at least, not only from the feelings of others but from certain ones of his own. People seem to exist for him only as matter for contemplation, along with natural objects and objects of art; indeed, he is likely to respond to these latter more directly. He sees, not individuals, but the collective soldier, the collective hero, the collective man (see for example *The Death of a Soldier*, *Examination of the Hero in Time of War*, *Chocorua to Its Neighbor*). He assumes various persons, it is true, but only as a manner of speech, and never as true dramatic impersonation. He remains the detached spectator, chiefly, even of his own emotions; it is as spectator, not as participant, that he is moved when he is moved. His pleasures and pains are those of the exquisite connoisseur, rather than the fundamental ecstasy and anguish of the human soul in itself. Look at the way in which he handles the Crucifixion in *Lunar Paraphrase*: he is concerned with it only as an artistic arrangement to serve as a metaphor for November moonlight.

His activities are mental only, but they hardly cover all that may happen even in the mental theater. They are not as rational as they appear, and the poetry is not strictly philosophical poetry; you would never be able to state the argument of it as you might that of any page of, say, Lucretius. Perhaps one might call these activities a dialectic of the imagination, playing perpetually on the diverse relations of things, ideas, images, and emotions. Sometimes he takes a thing or an idea and relates it to a series of intricately connected images producing different emotions; sometimes he holds a mood or an image constant and relates it to

different objects and ideas; but it is these which are his concern, and indeed there is hardly a permutation or combination of these that he has missed. It is no accident, thus, that he often writes in forms which approach those of music: the theme with variations as in *13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*, *Nuances on a Theme by Williams*, *Sea Surface Full of Clouds*, and *Variations on a Summer Day*; the suite, as in *Like Decorations in a Nigger Cemetery*, *Examination of the Hero . . .*, and the *Extracts from Addresses to the Academy of Fine Ideas*; and even the fugue, as in *The Pure Good of Theory and Description without Place*. In all this, his philosophic materials—his problems of whether the knower is ever identical with the known, whether the world is the same for all or different for each, whether language can express reality or extend sensation, and so on—are but a single element. Yet all these elements are only the colored bits of glass and angled mirrors of the kaleidoscope which is his imagination; it is the innumerable images which form and dislimn that hold our interest, and, I suspect, Stevens'. It is these that produce his thought and emotions, and it is in these that his thoughts and emotions find ultimate expression; witness *Life Is Motion* and *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*, respectively.

Divorced as Stevens' work is from the human drama as it is usually conceived, the images themselves are tremendously "dramatic," as we say a picture of the ocean, of clouds, of still life, or even an arrangement of colors is dramatic. Visual imagery predominates in his work, and he is amazingly successful with it; often he seems to see objects as a painter would, and then to

realize them in words. He seems aware of this himself: his titles frequently suggest those of pictures (*Bantams in Pine Woods*, *Landscape with Boat*, *Sea Surface Full of Clouds*), and he can refer to Corot for an autumn evening, to Franz Hals for a cloudscape. One almost looks for the signature of Cézanne under *Study of Two Pears*, of Renoir under *Poems of Our Climate*. There is perhaps no quicker way to poetic shipwreck than by cataloguing colors; yet Stevens triumphs in this difficult business again and again. He knows how to heighten colors and set them against a contrasting background, as in "rouged fruits in early snow"; how to modify them sharply and effectively, as in "blunt yellow," "dense violet"; even how to suggest them without mentioning them (note how many colors spring to mind in *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*, though none is mentioned). He knows the importance of light and shade ("The shadows of the pears / Are blobs on the green cloth") and the influence of atmosphere on objects (observe how bright the tigers are in "tigers in red weather"). And he can draw upon a palette whose colors range from the stark, gaudy flatness of circus posters to such luminous transparencies as "the dove with eye of grenadine" and "Triton dissolved in shifting diaphanes / Of blue and green. . . ."

These are only snatches: see what he can do in a few lines:

Our bloom is gone. We are the fruit thereof.
Two golden gourds distended on our vines,
Into the autumn weather, splashed with
frost,
Distorted by hale fatness, turned grotesque.
We hang like warty squashes, streaked and
rayed. . . .

Last night, we sat beside a pool of pink,

Clipped with lilies scudding the bright
chromes,
Keen to the point of starlight. . . .

He achieves such startling triumphs, however, not because he is a painter, but because he is a writer. Someone—I have forgotten who—once praised a passage in a story by Aubrey Beardsley because it described a fountain so elaborately that a sculptor might easily have executed after it. He was badly mistaken. Painting and "painting in words" are very different things. The colors of the imagination are brief, imagined lines and planes can bear only the simplest relations to each other, and the poetic image can never have the precision of the painted one. Twenty artists executing even the most precise image in poetry would end up with twenty very different pictures. Imagination must deal with elements so simple and so few that they can be supplemented and synthesized instantly. Stevens is well aware of this; he has analyzed forms and simplified them into their essential lines and planes, to the point where they can be done in a few bold strokes. He can, thus, set before us the diagrammatic starkness of a steeple and a chimney stack in a "morbid light" with a single comparison: the scene is like "an electric lamp / On a page of Euclid." Where objects are more elaborate, he knows how to force the reader to construct them step by step, as in *Study of Two Pears* and *So-And-So Reclining on Her Couch*.

Marvellous as his visual images are merely as pictures, one misses their real force unless other aspects of them are taken into account. Images, I have remarked, are related to ideas, they produce ideas and are produced by ideas; they produce emotions and are pro-

duced by emotions. Now, we tend to make, from habit or convention, certain definite connections between a given idea and a given order of imagery, and between a given emotion and a given object of emotion. For example, the ancient Greeks and the medieval Christians had strikingly different imaginative conceptions of, and emotional attitudes toward, the idea of death, as their funeral statuary shows. I cannot discuss these connections here except to say that they have profound roots in the whole character of a society; they involve beliefs and attitudes which concern what is true or false, good or bad, beautiful or ugly.

An artist can use this preestablished switchboard, so to speak, just as it is, or he can change the connections. Dickens used the switchboard as it was to depict the criminals in *Oliver Twist*; Dostoevski altered it in *Crime and Punishment*. There are similar readjustments possible in emotional reaction. For example, we tend to compare something which we think beautiful with something else which we also think beautiful; La Forge obtains a startling effect by violating such conventional categories in his comparison of the autumn sun to saloon spittle or a ripped-out gland, and so does T. S. Eliot in his famous comparison of evening to an etherized patient. When the moral and emotional categories are violated in this fashion, the startled reader is likely to find the poetry which does so shocking, ridiculous, what you will; at the very least, unintelligible.

A part of Stevens' force lies in that he has never respected such categories too greatly. For one, he has always distrusted the kind of emotion which was the stock in trade of those who thought that poetry "should be simple

as a cry from the heart"; consequently he finds grounds for mockery in such emotions, even when he feels them deeply. His bitterness in *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*, his determination to violate the convention of respect for death, is based upon knowledge that the convention is hypocritical, and upon his own very real respect. Again, in *Le Monocle de Mon Oncle*, deeply in love, he mocks at himself and his beloved as too old for such emotion. The image of them as grotesque squashes, in the passage cited earlier, is so much a caricature as to be unintelligible, perhaps, unless we recognize the attitude from which it springs. Indeed, he has a whole string of devices for handling emotions which offend his sense of reticence or decorum; he translates them into comic terms, gives them partial or cryptic statement, or utters them through a mask. Thus *The Revolutionists Stop for Orangeade* appears to contain his *ars poetica*, but it satirizes the poetic revolution in which he was most earnestly involved as a mixed Hispano-American-cum-Italian revolution; *Like Decorations in a Nigger Cemetery* is a sort of autumn journal in which his (frequently profound) moods of the season are given cryptic intimation, and mocked at in the title, which apparently means as oddly-assorted a collection of memorials as one finds in such cemeteries; in *Chocorua to its Neighbor* he makes the mountain speak for him.

More than anything, it is the collapse of belief in our day—beliefs religious, ethical, political, metaphysical, even aesthetic—which moves him. His satire strikes at what he thinks false, but he is also intent on finding what can be thought true; thus his notion of poetry as the supreme fiction con-

structed to replace abolished belief, and of the imagination as the architect of that fiction. There has been much talk about his later poems as especially philosophic and difficult. I should say they are neither. Between them, two poems, *To One of Fictive Music* and *The Man with the Blue Guitar*, state nearly the whole body of ideas treated in his later work; the pieces in his first volume, *Harmonium*, contain every literary device he ever uses; and his enterprise is not so much philosophic as personal. I should say that it amounts to inventing imaginary objects of emotion, since the older objects of emotion can no longer be believed in as worthy of it, and since, after all, he feels strong need for such emotions. If what was formerly thought divine or heroic can no longer be believed in, one must invent something divine or heroic, because one must believe in the heroic and the divine.

The real source of whatever difficulty there may be in his poetry—leave aside his frequent use of foreign words, of old words, and of his famous invented cries of *hoo*, *ric-a-nic*, and so on—lies in the fact that he is primarily a poet of images. Images, merely by *themselves*, can 1) force the mind to supplement, rearrange, and augment, 2) produce other images, 3) cause inferences, 4) induce emotions and trains of emotion. Ideas must be collocated into propositions and arguments, must be related by signs of transition, coordina-

tion, and subordination, but images need not; and because Stevens is aware of this fact, he uses aphoristic and epigrammatic methods, even short-hand notations such as the fragmentary sentence and the isolated and disjunct phrase. This is likely to puzzle the reader who expects signs of logical relation, and who seeks to turn the poem into rational meanings. Images as such are not logically but psychologically related; and to look for rational meanings in them, as Stevens himself once pointed out, is to destroy their imaginative and affective value. Again, the reader who looks for explicit instruction—such as is frequent in the older poets—as to what emotional or moral attitude to take is likely to be distressed; but the image, if efficiently constructed, contains its own stimulus; one has merely to contemplate it, and to feel. Properly read—that is, read without expecting him to do what he will *not* do—Stevens is seldom obscure; almost invariably he gives us the materials we need if we are to feel as he wishes us to.

However he is read, he *should* be read; for he has one of the most exquisitely fastidious minds of our age. Any contact whatsoever with it, perfect or imperfect, is certain to be exciting and valuable. In one of his latest poems, calling himself Ariel, he remarks "Ariel was glad he had written his poems"; whoever reads him will be glad also.

Hamlet to Ophelia

HAROLD C. GODDARD

WHO, reading *Hamlet* for the first time, is not disappointed in Hamlet's letter to Ophelia? Who, reading it for the twentieth time, does not retain something of that disappointment, if over the years his mind has not capitulated to the commentators?

Here of all Shakespeare's characters is the one who comes closest to possessing the imaginative genius of his creator. Here is a man with a deep capacity for affection and a rare power to express it simply and directly:

"Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear
him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee."

"O! throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night."

So speaks Hamlet to Horatio, and to his mother when she confesses that his words have cleft her heart in twain. And even his more casual greetings of friends and acquaintances ring with the spontaneous cordiality of the man. "My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good

lads, how do ye both?" Or to the Players: "You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well: welcome, good friends. O, my old friend!" etc.

And yet, when this same man writes to one who, we would like to think, is more to him than all the others put together, this is what he produces:

*"To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the
most beautified Ophelia. In her excellent
white bosom, these, &c.*

*Doubt thou the stars are fire;
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt I love.*

*O dear Ophelia! I am ill at these numbers:
I have not art to reckon my groans; but
that I love thee best, O most best! believe it.
Adieu.*

*Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst
this machine is to him,*

HAMLET

It is a hard pill for lovers of Hamlet to swallow. We wouldn't have thought it of the man who said, "Something too much of this." It sounds more like Osric addressing some Elizabethan maid of honor, if the anachronism may be pardoned. "Never doubt I love." Alas we might all too easily doubt it on the evidence here submitted. Even the uninitiated in psychology might well suspect the sincerity of an epistle so overloaded with adjectives and superlatives, with its *dears* and *mosts* and *bests*, its *adieu* and *etcetera*, not to mention the epithet *beautified*, which event that seasoned worldling Polonius finds "vile," or the reiterated word *doubt* which must in one instance be wrenched into

The late Professor Goddard was chairman of the department of English, Swarthmore College, 1909-1946, and the author of The Meaning of Shakespeare. For the text of this article we are indebted to his daughter, Eleanor Goddard Worthen, who found it among his papers and sent it to us.

a meaning different from the one that it carries in the other three to bring any sense or logic into the third line of the quatrain. (A cynic, indeed, might find in that third line a sort of "joker" slyly inserted to annul the effect of the whole.) And why, in the name of Love's simplicity, should Hamlet have reserved for a girl who was scarcely more than a child a word, *machine*, so rare at that time that it does not occur even once elsewhere in all Shakespeare's works? Taken singly, any one of these lapses might be overlooked, but taken together they are hard to reconcile with the character or manner of the man who bade the Players not to overstep the modesty of nature.

"Oh, but this is a letter," it will be said, the implication being that allowance must be made for the epistolary style. Yet we have two other letters of Hamlet's, to Horatio and to the King, conspicuously lacking in the artificialities of his note to Ophelia. "But this is a love letter, and, what is more, an Elizabethan love letter," our objector will probably persist, bringing forward a crushing array of citations from Shakespeare's contemporaries to prove that this is the way that sort of thing was done in his day. But what of it? *It is the precise mark of Hamlet that he despised doing things as they were done in his day*, or any other "day," including Shakespeare's. If there was anything he scorned, it was falling in, along with the Rosencrantzes and Guildensterns and Osrics and all the other Tweedledums and Tweedledees, with what he called "the tune of the time." If a thing is in that tune, be sure it isn't Hamlet's.

"Hamlet's love letter was written before he began to play the madman," says Kittredge. "Its stilted style has

done him much harm in the esteem of modern readers. However, he is but following the fashion of Shakespeare's time."¹ He is. But a fashionable Hamlet, I repeat, is a contradiction in terms. (Ophelia tells us expressly that Hamlet did not follow fashion but that fashion followed him.) "Hamlet's letter is written in the affected language of euphuism," says Clarendon. It is. But to say so is like accusing Falstaff of talking like a puritan or Cleopatra of acting like a prude. What the man who said,

"Seems, madam! Nay, it is; I know not 'seems'"

thought of affected language is made sufficiently clear in his scathing satire of it in the scene with Osric. And so the attempts to bring this letter into line by those who variously find it odd, studied, stilted, inappropriate, artificial, conventional, or affected defeat themselves by calling attention to the very thing these critics want us to disregard, thereby revealing that they are themselves uneasy, not to say apologetic, about it, that they sense in it something very much in need of explanation, that—though they may not know it and would vehemently deny it—they feel underneath about it much as the naive reader does.

And so one is almost driven to believe that Shakespeare inserted this sample of the Prince of Denmark's love-making expressly to prove that Hamlet's feeling for Ophelia—like Romeo's for Rosaline—is not the real thing. The letter is certainly a trump card for those who hold that view. But the trouble with this way out of the difficulty is that it wrecks the play in too many respects to be tolerable. For my-

¹ *Hamlet*, edited by G. L. Kittredge, p. 182.

self, I could more easily believe that Hamlet, recognizing that love and vengeance cannot keep company, set out deliberately to be as unlike himself as he could and sent the letter to Ophelia with the express purpose of alienating her affection. But this theory, like the other, would be tolerable only as a last resort.

A very different possibility occurred to me recently as I was rereading the play. One reason why the idea made an immediate appeal to me was that it also seemed to clear up perfectly one of the minor perplexities of the play that has baffled many readers and critics. The longest way round is often the shortest way home, and what may seem at this point a considerable digression will really bring us to the heart of our problem.

At the beginning of the second act, it will be remembered, Polonius is discovered coaching the young Reynaldo in the art of spying. He wants him to eavesdrop on his son, Laertes, in Paris. Why did Shakespeare, in a play in which space is as valuable as it is in *Hamlet*, bestow such detailed attention on so minor an incident? Many commentators have admitted their puzzlement at the scene and its length. As an answer to the enigma Granville-Barker suggests a shift on Shakespeare's part in his conception of Polonius. "We can, I think, see Shakespeare changing his mind a little about Polonius," he says. "... The change comes with the charge to Reynaldo; and hence, perhaps, the seemingly undue length allowed to that minor matter; our first impressions of the character must be corrected."² And J. M. Robertson, in a section headed "Irrelevant Scenes,"³ refers to the "co-

nundrum" of Reynaldo's mission. "That Shakespeare invented such a purposeless episode as the present merely to exhibit the character of Polonius is unthinkable," he declares, and proceeds to postulate "another hand between Kyd and Shakespeare" to account for the scene. "As our play now stands," he argues, "the only conceivable motive for the Reynaldo scene is the theatrical need for comic relief after the tremendous Ghost scene," and he suggests that it may be a relic of an earlier version in which the messenger to Paris "served a purpose in the action," perhaps, he conjectures, to carry to Laertes news of his father's death. The implication that the scene as we now have it serves little or no purpose in the action is backed up by the practice of most stage directors. It is usually cut out or cut down in production. It is a pity to lose it, but the play can be understood without it. So the directors seem to reason.

Whether or not it is necessary to the plot of *Hamlet*, there can be no two opinions of its quality as a scene. Emerson once remarked that every line of a poem should be a poem. By the same token, every scene of a play should be a play. This one is—a little masterpiece all by itself. In its seventy-four lines we get Polonius' number perfectly, if we have not gotten it before; and when at the end of it he says to Reynaldo, "You have me, have you not?" the reader replies with Reynaldo, if in a different sense, "My lord, I have."

And we have Reynaldo no less. His portrayal is one of Shakespeare's innumerable little miracles in the individualization of a very minor character. Between a third and a half of Reynaldo's allotment of sixty-five words is spent in repeating "My lord," which he

² *Preface to Shakespeare*, Vol. I, p. 204.

³ *The Problem of Hamlet*, p. 57.

does ten times, with a "my good lord" and a "good my lord" thrown in for good measure. And yet he is no cipher like Shallow, nor echo like Aguecheek. He is an innocent youth with a high sense of honor who is horrified at the role of spy for which he is being cast, yet is too modest and inexperienced to protest except, as it were, in an undertone. *The World Corrupting Innocence* the scene might be called—and we think of Blake's engraving *Aged Ignorance*: an old man wearing spectacles, seated under a tree, clipping the wings of a boy who seeks to escape. But a more Hamletian title would be *Poison in the Ear*, for poison of the most noxious brew is what Polonius pours and Reynaldo's ear is the receptacle into which he pours it—so closely in theme is this seemingly digressive scene integrated with the rest of the play. As the first of several scenes on the theme of spying or eavesdropping, it prepares, too, for the others and points straight at Polonius' own death behind the arras. Little does the old man realize that he is rehearsing his own end as he shows Reynaldo how to set the mouse-trap wherein to catch the conscience of Laertes—for here is an intimation of still another of the main themes of the play. Polonius' metaphor, to be sure, turns the mouse-trap into a fish-hook:

"See you now;
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth;
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlasses, and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out:
So by my former lecture and advice
Shall you my son."

But, trap or hook, it comes to the same thing.

However, there is an important distinction. Hamlet makes his test in pub-

lic, with as open a mind as he can command, to find out whether the King is guilty. Polonius makes his surreptitiously merely to gather evidence of a guilt he calmly takes for granted. Hamlet's is a genuine experiment. Polonius' is to set a purely formal seal on what is already a foregone conclusion.

Verification such as Hamlet feels the need of is superfluous to Polonius for the simple reason that Polonius is the type of man who is always right. His opinion and the Truth are synonyms—in his opinion. Let an idea enter such a mind and it immediately takes on the character of unshakable dogma. "Do you think 'tis this?" asks the skeptical and intelligent King in the later scene in which Polonius expounds his theory of Hamlet's madness. "It may be, very likely," the more nearly but not utterly persuaded Queen agrees. How different, both of them, from Polonius, with his cocksure tone:

"Hath there been such a time,—I'd fain know that,—
That I have positively said, 'Tis so,'
When it prov'd otherwise?"

"Not that I know," the King replies. But this is no admission of the Lord Chamberlain's infallibility. On the contrary it is a sign that Claudius recognizes the futility of contradicting a man who conceives his own brain under the figure of a hound with so perfect a scent for the truth that the truth is incapable of eluding it—an ominous metaphor if pushed to its conclusion.

A tiny touch in the same scene—a single word—reveals this egotism of the Lord Chamberlain's in a comical way. When the King, following Polonius' revelation, asks how Ophelia has received Hamlet's love, Polonius does not say, "What do you think of her?" or even "What do you think of my

daughter?" but "What do you think of me?" Polonius' universe is Ptolemaic and he is its center.

Now a man so certain of himself and his conclusions will naturally hold it a mere peccadillo, if evidence for a particular conclusion does not happen to be at hand, to manufacture it out of whole cloth. "After all, since the thing is true, what difference does it make?" he reasons. And that is what we see him doing in the Reynaldo scene. His rooted conviction is that Laertes is living the life of a libertine in Paris. What possible harm, then, in suggesting that Reynaldo concoct a few tales of his misconduct?

"... there put on him

What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank

As may dishonour him; take heed of that; But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips As are companions noted and most known To youth and liberty."

If the young man to be "sullied" in this fashion had been a stranger, it would have been bad enough. But he is Polonius' own son. Indeed, the old man seems to be taking a sort of vicarious pride in the fact that his boy will be welcomed by the fashionable young bloods of Paris and lets his hopes, doubtless not unaided by memories of his own youth, fill in the details of the picture. Yet Shakespeare grants even Polonius a soul. He shows that there is a genuine father within him, however deeply buried, who recognizes the abhorrent character of what he is doing. But Shakespeare himself, appropriately, buries the point deep.

There are people who think that the psychology of the unconscious is a recent discovery, that Freud, for example, was the first to observe the revealing character of slips of the tongue

or sudden losses of memory. Such persons have never read Shakespeare with attention (or Chaucer either, for that matter, to go no further back). When Polonius comes to the vile conclusion of his proposition, his memory deserts him:

"And then, sir, does he this,—he does,— what was I about to say? By the mass I was about to say something: where did I leave?"

(the one passage of prose, significantly, in the scene). And Reynaldo has to help him out. This *lapsus memoriae* characterizes Polonius' act better than anything else in the scene. It is an act that his soul dares not look in the face.

Yet, in spite of all these and other merits of this scene as a scene, the objection still stands that it appears to be by no means indispensable to the *action*, and from the architectonic point of view one wonders how Shakespeare felt he could afford to include it, or at least how he justified its length. He is fond enough of brief digressions whose link with the rest is purely poetic or symbolic. But there are few scenes in his supreme plays as long as the Reynaldo scene that are not closely tied to the action as well. Does not that fact set up a presumption that there is such a tie in this case too, if we can only find it? I think it does. And I think we can find it. The scene is specifically contrived, it seems to me, to prepare for the one in which Polonius discusses the cause of Hamlet's madness with the King and Queen, so specifically, indeed, that the latter scene cannot be understood without it. And that scene in turn ties it to the very heart of Hamlet's mystery.

And here I shall be surprised if the reader has not anticipated what I am about to say.

If Polonius is not above forgery (his own word, be it remembered) to prove his conviction that his son is leading a wild life in Paris, why should he be above forgery to prove the much more enticing and exciting theory that a Crown Prince has been driven mad by love of his daughter and her rejection of him?

Of course he would not be above it. Polonius is above nothing indirect, sly, or crafty; he is above nothing that will flatter his own ego by proving his own wisdom; and most of all, he is above nothing that will exhibit that wisdom to royalty and so put himself in its good graces.

Rather obviously he reasons in some such way as this: "Anyone can see that Hamlet is mad. No one *except me* knows that he is violently in love with my daughter and that I gave her orders to reject his love. If I can prove the love and then tell of the rejection, the madness will be explained." How then shall he prove the love? Even Polonius has sense enough to realize that a second-hand account of Hamlet's visit to his daughter's closet will carry no such conviction as did the words of the terrified girl herself red-hot, as it were, from the interview. He must have more objective evidence. What better way to "document" his case than with a letter?

If, then, no letter of Hamlet to Ophelia were in his possession, or if, possessing one, he did not find it satisfactory, what would be more likely than that he would compose one for the occasion, or touch up an existing one to suit his purpose? Why otherwise should Shakespeare have been at such pains to demonstrate Polonius' capacity for forgery—even to the employment of that very word? Such a supposition clears up at a stroke any mystery about

the inclusion or the length of the Reynaldo scene and dissipates equally completely the question of the uncharacteristic nature of "Hamlet's" letter, a question which, as we have seen, has bothered both unsophisticated readers and the most sophisticated critics. If, on a re-examination of the letter in the light of this hypothesis, signs appear of its having been fabricated or amended by Polonius, the case will be that much stronger. But before looking at that document again, it may be pointed out that the Letter Scene, apart from the letter itself, contains several lines and phrases that may take on a new meaning on the assumption that Polonius is trying to put over a composition of his own as Hamlet's. These points, however, are incidental rather than crucial. If there is anything in them, they add so much weight to the hypothesis of forgery. But if there is nothing in them, they do not detract from it.

Too much need not be made of the elaborate exordium—the "brevity is the soul of wit" speech—with which Polonius leads up to his announcement of Hamlet's madness and its cause. It is the preliminary flourish, the verbal counterpart of Osric's bowings and scrapings, appropriate to the man, and intended, like introductory bars in music, to set into relief what is to follow. Yet the style is excessively devious even for Polonius and it is interesting to note that Shakespeare frequently uses this sinuous manner of speech as a mark of (usually unconscious) perturbation on the part of a person about to say or do something false or cowardly—as though the man's soul were trying to hold him back, and consciousness, stalled without understanding the reason, were compelled to

fill in the gap with impromptu inconsequentialities. At the very least, we may say that if Polonius were about to produce a forged document, he might be expected to speak in exactly the meandering manner in which he does. So diagnosed, his verboriousities would be simply something a little more than his usual garrulity and something a little less than the complete loss of memory we saw him undergo when arranging his "forgery" against Laertes, though he seems on the verge of such a loss when his thought, which has been growing thinner and thinner, vanishes entirely in the meaningless line:

"Thus it remains, and the remander thus."

But he pulls himself together and comes to the point.

"I have a daughter, have while she is mine;" he begins,

"Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this: now, gather, and surmise,"

whereupon he starts reading the letter. But he has barely begun when the Queen interrupts to ask, "Came this from Hamlet to her?" Since Hamlet's madness is the issue and he and Ophelia are the only two who have been mentioned, the question seems superfluous. Has Gertrude, like others since her time, detected something uncharacteristic in the letter? Her words could easily bear such a construction. But possibly all she is asking is confirmation from Polonius' lips of what she is already convinced of in her heart.

If so, she does not get it. Instead of replying to the Queen's question by saying, "Madam, it did," Polonius puts her off with:

"Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful."

A touch of annoyance at being interrupted? Or at having his climax anticipated? Either would be natural enough. But if the letter is a forgery, Polonius' evasion and unwillingness to utter "the lie direct" are precisely what we would expect of him in the circumstances. The truthful man, when he decides to lie, looks you straight in the eye and utters his falsehood in a downright fashion with a good conscience. It is the habitual liar who, in spite of his experience, sidesteps or evades. "As universal a practice as lying is," says Swift, "and as easy a one as it seems, I do not remember to have heard three good lies in all my conversation, even from those most celebrated in that faculty." Polonius is the last man to be capable of a good lie.

From this point he goes on to the end of the letter uninterrupted and, having read the signature, adds:

"This in obedience hath my daughter shown me."

But he said that before. Why repeat it? (This is a repetition of a very different type from the mere wordiness or prolixity we continually expect from him.) Is he still seeking to dissipate a trace of skepticism on the Queen's face, or the King's, as to the authorship of the letter? Is he just a shade too anxious to explain how so confidential a document as one of his daughter's love letters happened to be in his possession? Or is the repeated statement an over-compensation for something he is unconsciously ashamed of? Any of these explanations, or all of them, would fit the theory that the letter is forged. Polonius being Polonius, his mere assertion that his daughter showed him the letter in obedience makes us suspect that she did not. His repetition of the

statement makes us practically certain that she did not. The classic example of this psychology occurs later in this very play: "The lady doth protest too much, methinks."

But Polonius goes even further. According to him, Ophelia did not stop with the surrender of the letter:

"And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and
place,
All given to mine ear."

But who will believe that such a daughter as Ophelia would confide to such a father as Polonius all the details of what was undoubtedly her first love affair? Polonius is a domestic tyrant. Ophelia is a timid, docile, and obedient child. That she should run to him when frightened, as when she tells of Hamlet's visit to her closet; or obey a direct command, as when she denies her lover access to her and repels his letters; or give up a letter if her father knew definitely of its existence or caught her with it in her hand: any of these things is quite in character. But I recall nothing in the text that forces us to picture her as a girl who would reveal secrets to which her father had no clue or who would genuinely unbosom herself to so unfeeling a man. On the contrary, Shakespeare strongly intimates that she kept a great deal back. If she had confessed as fully as her father pretended, would she have gone mad? Her madness is the measure of what she still had locked up in her breast. Ophelia may have handed over a letter from her lover. But we need more than her father's unsupported assertion to that effect before we are compelled to accept his testimony as fact.

In justification of a skeptical attitude toward everything Polonius says about

the relations of Hamlet and Ophelia, one particularly marked discrepancy may be pointed out. He tells the King that he himself noticed what was happening before his daughter confessed:

"When I had seen this hot love on the wing,
As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me,"

etc.; whereas he told Ophelia (only after she herself had introduced Hamlet's name) that rumors of their relations had come to him:

"Marry, well bethought:
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and
bounteous.
If it be so,—as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution,—I must tell
you,"

etc. Plainly he was lying in one case or the other. The chances are that he was in both.

And now, having cleared the way, let us scrutinize the letter itself.

"To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautiful Ophelia."

Suppose the incident in which it figures were not included in *Hamlet* at all and we were given the letter, with the names in blank, and asked to guess what character in Shakespeare wrote it. Who would ever think of Hamlet?

Could anything, especially that *beautified*, be less like Hamlet? (Or more like Polonius, we are tempted to add.) Theobald, the most inspired of Shakespearean emendators, was so struck with the "dreadful anticlimax" of *beautified* coming after *celestial* and *soul's idol* that he suggested the substitution for it of *beatified*. Few, if any, editors have adopted this reading, but Theobald's objection to *beautified* has never been met. Feeling the incongruity

of the adjective with the assumed author of the letter, commentators have been at pains to explain it away by contending that the word means neither more nor less than *beautiful* (which, if it does, still leaves the anticlimax). "Hamlet has used *beautified*," says Kitteredge, "in the sense of 'endowed with beauties'—as an emphatic synonym for the ordinary word *beautiful*." Polonius censures it as affected and also, no doubt, as suggesting artificial aids to beauty.⁵ And so we have the arch-rhetorician reading a lesson in sincerity to the apostle of simplicity in speech. And the editor of the play in the Tudor

⁵ Shakespeare uses *beautified* in just one other place (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, IV, i, 55) and this passage has been widely relied on to prove that it meant *beautiful* to him and that therefore it was not a "vile phrase" to Hamlet. But under inspection the instance turns out to be a more than dubious one. The scene is in the forest between Milan and Verona when Valentine encounters the outlaws, and they, struck by his gentlemanly bearing, ask him to become their captain:

"... seeing you are beautified
With goodly shape, and by your own report
A linguist, and a man of such perfection
As we do in our quality much want."

Even this much of the context makes plain that the outlaws are speaking of Valentine's appearance and worldly accomplishments, not of beauty in any spiritual sense, concerning which, as men who have been banished from society for abduction, murder, and "such like petty crimes," they can hardly qualify as authorities. Moreover, it is to be noted that *beautified*, instead of being an adjective as in the letter to Ophelia, is the past participle of the verb *beautify*, and this makes a big difference between the two instances. Even today the verb carries a very different flavor from the adjective. We might still say without offense that the sunset beautified every leaf and stone. But to talk about beautified stones and leaves would imply that they had been subjected to some artificial attempt to better their appearance.

Probably the most illuminating use of *beautify* in Shakespeare is Lady Capulet's inane couplet describing Paris:

"This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
To beautify him, only lacks a cover."

⁶ *Hamlet*, op. cit., p. 182.

edition (George P. Baker) achieves, if possible, an even greater paradox. *Beautified* is used, he says, "in a sense of the time, 'gifted with beauty,' not in the modern sense, understood by Polonius, 'beautified artificially'." How Polonius came to take the word in its modern sense is not explained. Is it not a bit odd to find that inveterate time-server so far ahead of his time? Again, he and Hamlet seem to have exchanged roles. Moreover, all these attempts to defend the reputation of this very dubious adjective blink one fact that the text makes incontrovertible: that the worldly Polonius found it "an ill phrase," "a vile phrase." It would take more than a modern commentator to re-establish its innocence after being indicted by a man so unsqueamish in such matters as he.

"But in that event what becomes of your theory that Polonius forged the letter?" someone will be certain to inquire. "You cannot have it both ways. If the adjective is his, he would not call it vile. If he calls it vile, that shows it isn't his." The retort sounds convincing but it overlooks the fact that Polonius may have been attributing a vile phrase to Hamlet intentionally, or, what is much more likely, that he was just fool enough to suppose Hamlet would really use it in a letter to Ophelia—and discovers his mistake too late.

We may be certain that as Polonius reads he is watching the faces of his two royal auditors to catch their reaction. Is it possible that at the phrase *beautified Ophelia* a faint frown of doubt or disapproval crosses the countenance of either the King or the Queen, or both, causing Polonius to hesitate and attempt on the spur of the moment to cover his error by condemning the word he had used in all seriousness? It

is exactly like Shakespeare to slip in histrionic directions in this way. It is exactly like Polonius, too, who is an unconscionable fawner and flatterer, to fall in with the faintest intimation of royalty. Would it be exactly like the Queen or the King, it remains to be asked, to be displeased by the word *beautified*? In the case of the Queen, all we can say is that the mother knew little of the son if she thought he had a taste for beautified women. (Hamlet, like his creator, makes abundantly plain his detestation of any tampering with nature in this respect—a consideration almost sufficient in itself to rule out Hamlet as author of the letter unless it can be demonstrated that *beautified* does not mean what it seems to mean, or that the text is corrupt, as Theobald would have us believe.) But in the case of the King we happen to know quite specifically that he disapproved of a slightly different form of this very word.

In the opening scene of the next act, Polonius, indulging in a little further forgery, asks his daughter to act as decoy for Hamlet while he and the King eaves drop on the interview:

"Read on this book,"

he says to Ophelia,

"That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in
this,
'Tis too much prov'd, that with devotion's
visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself."

The irony of this, at such a moment, is obvious. The King, keener than Polonius, gets the application of the words to himself and remarks in an aside:

"O! 'tis too true;
How smart a lash that speech doth give my
conscience!

The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering
art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word.
O heavy burden!"

Beautied and *beautified*—not a hair's difference between their meanings. So does Shakespeare give proof that *beautified* was a vile word to the King. Is it stretching anything to conjecture that *therefore* it became one on the instant to the yes-man Polonius? . . . I can understand how far-fetched any connection between the two passages must seem to anyone uninitiated into Shakespeare's psychological subtleties. But anyone who knows him well knows that his supreme plays are literal webs of such minute interrelations.

The words, "but you shall hear," that follow Polonius' condemnation of the vile phrase are somewhat ambiguous. They might imply either "but there is worse to come" or, just the opposite, "but there is no further offense in the letter." Either would testify that he was watching the effect on his auditors closely. The *etcetera* (*In her excellent white bosom, these, & c.*) is generally dismissed as a bit of epistolary convention, but it is at least possible to doubt whether it is rightly included in the letter itself. (Some editors drop it.) It may be that at just this point Polonius suddenly decides to omit something from the document he has fabricated, in compliance with an expression on the face of Gertrude, and that the *etcetera* is his way of covering a pause, for, significantly, it is right here that she inquires, "Came this from Hamlet to her?" Adams, in his edition, even gives her the stage direction, *Reaching out for the letter*, just before she asks the question. That fits the forgery theory perfectly by emphasizing her skepti-

cism and stressing the fact that Polonius is careful to keep possession of it.

*Doubt thou the stars are fire;
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt I love.*

"Hamlet's poetry is poor, as he himself confesses," says Kittredge of these lines; "but it was expected that every lover should show his devotion in verse."⁸ Hamlet was so given to doing the expected thing! And how comes it that the man who, as Bradley remarks, is the one character in Shakespeare whom we can conceive of as the author of Shakespeare's plays falls so unaccountably below his known powers of expression when he comes to write a love letter?

Yet however "poor" its quality, the quatrain, relative to the rest, is the part of the letter that (except for its third line) might most easily be imagined Hamlet's. But, unluckily for the assumption that it is his, that third line points straight at Polonius.

The first two lines call on Ophelia to doubt two indubitable truths sooner than doubt his devotion: that the stars are fire and that the sun moves. The third line, on the contrary, calls on her to doubt a manifest lie—that truth is a liar—sooner than doubt his love, causing the thought of the little poem not to rise to a climax but to fall into an absurdity. It is as if Hamlet had written:

*Doubt that one and one are two;
Doubt that two and two are four;
Doubt that three and three are seven;
But never doubt my love.*

But now look at it on the other assumption. Could the character of Polonius be more succinctly summed up than to say that he is a man who holds

truth to be a liar? His method of getting at what he considers the truth is—to lie. Why! to the puzzlement of many who have not sounded the depths of his mendacity, he can suborn to the purposes of falsehood even so fine a truth as

"... to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man,"

making true in his own person for the moment the perverted proposition that truth is a liar. Indeed, a queer reversal of the usual procedure is in order where Polonius is concerned. In general the burden of proof is on anyone who contends that an apparently straightforward statement carries a crooked or sinister meaning. But with Polonius exactly the opposite is true. The burden of proof is on whoever takes anything that comes from him at face value. Like an habitual criminal, he is to be presumed guilty unless he can clear himself. The spirit, too, leaves its fingerprints, and it is practically an axiom that anything Polonius touches will carry the mark of his corruption. The third line of "Hamlet's" quatrain smells of a moral obliquity precisely like his own. Modern analytic psychology has shown over and over that it is in just such unconscious slips as this inversion—which, if occasioned by the demand for a rhyme, makes the case all the more convincing—we give ourselves away. And Shakespeare proves over and over that he anticipates analytic psychology on this point. That "doubt truth to be a liar" is almost as good as Polonius' initials under the signature "Hamlet"—or, shall we say, as his thumb print in the margin?

The remaining sentences of the letter speak for themselves. We have already

⁸ *Hamlet, op. cit.*, p. 182.

mentioned the word *machine*. "The advance of practical invention," says Kit-tredge, "has made the word *machine* so familiar that it sounds hopelessly prosaic, but to Shakespeare's audience it was an 'elegant' term."⁷ Again, a Hamlet bent on the proprieties!

And then there is the word *art*. "I use no art," says Polonius just before he reads the letter, and, as if once were not enough, he repeats it, "I will use no art." "I have not art," says the letter itself. If Hamlet wrote it, this is, to say the least, a queer coincidence. But if the letter is a forgery, it is exactly the sort of clue⁸ we might expect Shakespeare to drop. Indeed, the word *art* in the letter is in itself a bit suspicious. Art, in its creative sense, was the interest closest to Hamlet's heart, while it was quite out of Polonius' range. But in its artificial sense nothing was dearer to Polonius than "art"—a conception and a word that were in neither the philosophy nor the vocabulary of Hamlet, except for purposes of derision. Again, his merciless parody of Osric comes to mind. In the light of it, one would like to hear Hamlet's opinion of "Hamlet's" letter to Ophelia.

The only alternative I can think of⁹

⁷ *Hamlet*, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁸ The possible echo in "I am ill at these numbers" of Polonius' "That's an ill phrase" is scarcely worth mentioning.

⁹ It might for a moment be an alluring idea to suppose that Hamlet himself "forged" the letter and contrived to have it fall into the hands of Polonius. It would not be at all out of character. But it is affectation, not pretended madness, that the letter breathes, and if Shakespeare had intended to suggest that Hamlet was fooling Polonius be sure he would have given some further clue. There is all the difference in the world between a subtlety in Shakespearean interpretation that remains just a "bright idea" and one that specific points in the text immediately leap forward to confirm, as the Reynaldo scene clinches the idea that Polonius was

to the view that the letter isn't his is the theory that Hamlet himself passed through an Osrician stage of which the letter is a relic. Perhaps he did. Perhaps that accounts for his later violent antipathy to anything artificial. We are all of us likely to turn on whatever reminds us of one of our rejected selves with just such cynicism. But if once upon a time Hamlet was a creature of fashion, it must have been far in the past, for all the impressions we get from the text of what Hamlet was prior to his father's death indicate that he had long since been a disciple of naturalness and simplicity.

"Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice

And could of men distinguish,"

he declares, he had picked as his bosom friend not some rich and influential court favorite but the poor and inconspicuous Horatio. His advice to the Players reveals a similarly ingrained taste for the modest and unhistrionic in acting. And Ophelia's description of him as he was before his mind was supposedly overthrown confirms these impressions.

This maturity of judgment, taste, and character—not to mention the Shakespearean range and wisdom for which Hamlet is almost universally given credit—is not something to be acquired overnight. Ophelia could have been but the merest child at a time when Hamlet would have been capable of writing such a letter. If we ignore this chronological difficulty, and make the letter contemporary with the action of the play, we are caught on the other horn of the dilemma, for we are then compelled to believe that Ham-

capable of forgery or as the King's aside proves that at heart Claudius loathed artificial aids to beauty.

let's love, instead of being profound and tender, was little more than gallantry or sentimentalism, an idea, I believe, that outrages the instincts of all unprejudiced readers and mars the play in a dozen other respects. If a love such as could have produced that letter was all Hamlet had to give up in order to obey the injunction of the Ghost, his sacrifice was an easier one than has generally been held. That is the predicament in which this epistle to the most beautified Ophelia places us. If Polonius wrote it, all these difficulties disappear. If Hamlet's authorship of it is to be maintained, some equally satisfactory disposition of them is demanded.

The fact is that criticism has never really grappled with the problem of this letter. Instead, as we have seen, it has evaded it. And so—quite apart from its acceptance or rejection—I think the hypothesis of forgery has been worth raising, if it has compelled us to look this letter, and its implications, in the face. Forgery or no forgery, the consequences of confronting it squarely are considerable. A Hamlet freed of the responsibility of writing it is once and for all a different Hamlet from one who must shoulder that responsibility; while a Hamlet who has been a slave to courtly fashion is likewise a different man from one who has never been a victim of "the tune of the time."

And, similarly, with Polonius. The history of his role shows how many shades of interpretation his character is susceptible of—most of them, in all conscience, making him out bad enough. But if the count of the letter be added, as a cap-stone, to the rest of the indictment against him, his folly

is given a criminal edge, his fate an added irony and justice, that deepen the moral significance of his story and impart to it an extraordinary pertinence to our time.

Polonius is a perfect specimen of the despotic mind in its most cowardly aspect. Tyranny, as we have been learning over again to our bitter cost, proceeds by lying and violence: by lying if it can, by violence when it must—the one being the potential, the other the kinetic form of a Janus-faced entity for which we have no contemporary name but which we recognize as the god of all who put their trust in a union of mental and physical violence, or, to use the current nomenclature, in propaganda and the state. One of the two faces of that Janus is Polonius. So exactly is it that type for all time that not one feature of it has faded.

Forgery, thy name is Polonius!

It may seem a far cry from the Lord Chamberlain of Claudius' court and his domestic problems to the tremendous events of the present. But poetry, on whatever scale, has to do with things that remain the same for thousands of years, and one can never be certain that its most unconsidered trifle may not illuminate the most imposing of contemporary or historical events. The lies of Polonius led straight to his own death by violence and to the wholesale slaughter with which the drama of which he was one of the mainsprings ends. It is at least interesting to note that the greatest reign of violence the world has ever witnessed was formally initiated by what was perhaps the most striking symbolic forgery of all time: the Reichstag fire.

Sinclair Lewis and the Fortress of Reality

FREDERIC I. CARPENTER

DURING the decade of the 1920's the novels of Sinclair Lewis achieved an acclaim unequaled in the history of American literature. First *Main Street*, then *Babbitt* and *Arrowsmith* appealed to popular imagination and to critical judgement alike, each selling hundreds of thousands of copies. By general agreement Sinclair Lewis became spokesman of a new renaissance in American writing, and finally won world recognition with the first award to an American of the Nobel Prize for literature, in 1930. No such immediate success, combining the popular and the critical, the national and the international, has fallen to the lot of any American, before or since. As recently as August 5, 1944, the distinguished contributors to the *Saturday Review of Literature* for the past twenty years voted *Arrowsmith* the most important novel of the period.

But following the award of the Nobel Prize in 1930, the reputation of Sinclair Lewis steadily declined. By popular and critical agreement, his novels written after then became progressively worse. As literary fashions shifted from realism to symbolism, and popular attitudes from individualism to conservatism, critics began to ask: "How Good Is Sinclair Lewis?" In 1948 Warren Beck denounced the 1930 award of the Nobel Prize as "outrageous."¹ And Bernard De Voto ac-

cused Lewis of defaming the American character, calling the conception of *Arrowsmith* itself: "romantic, sentimental, and, above all, trivial."² Increasingly, even Lewis's admirers began to wonder: Why had his later novels become so bad? Had his earlier novels ever really been so good? Once again they saw illustrated in his career the fate of "the artist in America." For, beyond any possible question, Sinclair Lewis had been the representative American artist of his era.

In his Stockholm address on receiving the Nobel Prize, Lewis had described "the American novelist" as working "alone, in confusion, unassisted save by his own integrity."³ And the words accurately described Lewis himself. The confusion of values in which he worked may explain both his successes and his failures. When he was able to describe this confusion objectively, as in *Babbitt*, or to project his own integrity in a character such as that of *Arrowsmith*, he approached greatness. But as he grew older he found himself progressively involved in the confusion. The representative American artist progressively failed to understand, and so to transcend the confusion of his society.

Lewis?", *College English*, IX, 173 (January, 1948).

¹ Bernard De Voto, *The Literary Fallacy*, (Boston, 1944), p. 98.

² Sinclair Lewis, *The Man From Main Street*, (New York, 1953), p. 10.

³ Warren Beck, "How Good Is Sinclair

The confusion of values which Lewis imputed to American society, and which he himself shared, is suggested by a sentence from one of his last (and worst) novels. *The God-Seeker*, published in 1950, told of a young missionary to the Sioux Indians in 1850, who finally decided to abandon his search for God in the wilderness in order to lead his new bride "back in the fortress of reality," to St. Paul. Safe there from the insecurity of the frontier, this early "God-Seeker" became a successful contractor, and the fictional ancestor of George F. Babbitt. Like his creator, this Lewisian hero early sought God in the "Free Air" of the Western wilderness, and regarded the stodgy business men with a satiric eye. But like his creator, he later went "back in the fortress of reality," and regarded his early idealism as romantic and unreal.

Like many Americans and most realists, Lewis conceived of Reality in two ways.⁴ The first Reality included all the facts of life—both the material and the ideal, the ugly and the beautiful, the dull and the romantic. But the second "reality" included only the status quo of existing society—usually materialistic, and ugly, and unromantic. Following the tradition of nineteenth century "realism," the early Lewis described existing society as materialistic and ugly, in order to urge the reform of this narrow "reality." But the later Lewis increasingly identified this partial "reality" with total Reality, and therefore rejected as unreal that idealism which would reform society and that romance which would escape its existing conventions.

As late as 1935, Lewis could retro-

spectively describe the years 1885-1935 as "This Golden Half-Century,"⁵ when "there was romance everywhere, and life, instead of being a dusty routine, was exciting with hope and courage and adventure." For Lewis had been born a romantic and a liberal idealist. "For all his modernity," wrote Vernon Parrington, "Sinclair Lewis is still an echo of Jean Jacques and the golden hopes of the enlightenment."⁶ In his youth he had attended the Utopian "Helicon Hall" of Upton Sinclair. And always his heart had sympathized with the rebellious Carol Kennicut, the romantic Babbitt, and the God-seeking scientist, Martin Arrowsmith. The greatness of these earlier novels lay in the romance and idealism which he described as implicit even in the ugly "reality" of Main Street and Zenith.

But progressively as he grew older, Lewis praised those unromantic social realities which he had earlier satirized—although, to be sure, he had always valued them grudgingly. For even in celebrating the youthful freedom of Carol Kennicut, he had valued the unromantic realism of her doctor-husband. And even in sympathizing with the romantic dreams of George F. Babbitt, he had realistically returned him to the fortress of his family at last. Only with his ideal Martin Arrowsmith had he dared to pursue individual freedom to a cabin in the wilderness, and there, like Thoreau, his ideal hero suffered exile from social "reality." But after *Arrowsmith*, Lewis described all his idealistic heroes as either returning abjectly to "the fortress of reality," or miserably failing. So Dodsworth and

⁴ Sinclair Lewis, *The Man From Main Street*, pp. 254-268.

⁵ See Lionel Trilling, "Reality in America," in *The Liberal Imagination*, New York, 1950.

⁶ V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought* (New York, 1930), III, 367.

his wife sought romance in Europe, but found it empty and alien. Ann Vickers sought to reform society, but finally married the realistic judge whom she had earlier sought to indict. And *Work of Art* celebrated a work-a-day hero who abandoned his earlier ideal of creating the perfect hotel in order to make a living for his family in the real world.

All Lewis's novels described the conflict of men's ideals or dreams with the "reality" of things as they are. Some of his earlier novels achieved a measure of greatness by describing these conflicts vividly, and showing why the dreams failed or how the ideals sometimes achieved success. But all the later novels failed by denying the value, or the "reality," of those earlier ideals. By deporting romance to Europe and idealism to Utopia, they made "reality" safe for America. But in so doing, they themselves became unreal.

* * *

Disillusionment with the romantic idealism of the nineteenth century has been typical of the realism of the twentieth. But just as the earlier idealism was sometimes confused, so the disillusion has been. For sometimes the earlier idealism was pragmatic, and directed towards the reform or control of "reality": the ideals of the pioneer and the aviator, of the scientist and the doctor, were all realistic. But sometimes the earlier idealism was merely romantic, and directed toward escape from "reality": the dreams of the great lover and the world traveler, of the esthete and the perfectionist, were all unrealistic. When modern realism has described the falsity of the merely romantic ideals of escape, it has been valid. But when it has described all ideals as false, it has become confused and empty.

Lewis's first adult novel described the romantic idealism of *Our Mr. Wrenn*, who dreamed of world travel and free love, and sought them in Europe. But there he met the bohemian Istra Nash, who explained: "When a person is Free, you know, he is never free to be anything but Free." So Mr. Wrenn returned to America, a sadder but wiser man: although his idealism was romantically false, he had learned from it.

Lewis's second adult novel, *The Trail of the Hawk*, described the ideal of the aviator in the modern world. And an early, juvenile novel, *Hike and the Aeroplane*, had also celebrated the romance of flight. But characteristically, *The Hawk* described its hero as an opportunist who failed to realize the pragmatic ideal of man's conquest of the air, and soon lost sight of all his early idealism.

In later years, Lewis compared *The Trail of the Hawk* to the true life-story of Charles Lindbergh, described recently in *The Spirit of St. Louis*. But their differences are more important than their resemblances. The fictional Carl Ericson, the "hawk" of Joralemon, Minnesota, was a farm boy of Scandinavian ancestry like the actual Lindbergh, who, like him, turned mechanic, flew in barnstorming exhibitions, and felt and communicated to others the romance of flight. The first part of *The Trail of the Hawk* vividly prophesies the true story of "the lone eagle." But where Lindbergh focused his energies on his historic conquest of the Atlantic and became an authentic American hero, the fictional Carl Ericson, lacking any focus or heroism, puttered away his life, leaving even aviation at last and ending as a minor promoter. Not only does the second half of *The Trail of the Hawk* fail to realize the promise

of its title, but it fails to realize the actual heroism of American reality embodied in "the lone eagle." In long retrospect, the failure of *The Hawk* seems ominous.

The Job is one of the most interesting of Lewis's early novels. The heroine escapes from her Main Street to achieve freedom in the great world, and focuses her energies on her "Job" to achieve success as manager of a chain of hotels. But her name, Una Golden, is probably symbolic: her single-minded concern with the "reality" of business and money largely excludes love, and to her romance is incidental. Nevertheless she realizes more freedom than the later *Ann Vickers*, and more effective work than the later *Work of Art*—novels which deal more specifically with the freedom of woman, and the dedication of work.

With *Main Street* Lewis achieved fame. And *Main Street* begins with romantic idealism. Dedicated to "James Branch Cabell and Joseph Hergesheimer," its heroine is introduced: "On a hill by the Mississippi where Chippewas camped two generations ago," standing with a "quality of suspended freedom." This fictional grand-daughter of the pioneer "God-Seeker" of 1850 now questions the "comfortable faith" of Main Street, but after failing to convert her "dull neighbors" or to find romance with her unimaginative husband, she flees to New York and Washington in search of culture and freedom. But this freedom proves empty, and when Will Kennicut comes to woo her back, she returns. "It's so much more complicated than I knew when I put on Ground Grippers and started out to reform the world," she admits. She has failed, and returns to reality: "But I have won in this: I've never ex-

cused my failures by sneering at my aspirations." *Main Street* ends with the defeat of romantic idealism, but with the reaffirmation of ideals.

Babbitt achieved greater fame than *Main Street* and was a better novel. It enlarged the scope of the American society which it studied, but its scope does not explain its importance. In *Babbitt*, Lewis almost achieved the realist's ideal of allowing the story to tell itself without apparent interference of author. Where Lewis had obviously sympathized with Carol Kennicut, and later almost identified himself with Martin Arrowsmith, Babbitt is neither hero nor villain, but seems to exist in his own right—the natural product of his society. And through him America seems to reveal itself to the reader.

The archetypal American, George F. Babbitt, accepts the standards of his community without question, and when he revolts from them, does so blindly, as an individual or "natural" man. The natural friend of the sensitive Paul Riesling, he resents the crucifixion of Paul by society. With natural decency, he revolts against the political graft which society seems to take for granted. Seeking freedom from the narrow intolerance of his social group, he dares briefly defend the radical leader of the opposition party. Longing for romance, he indulges in a bohemian love affair. But recognizing that he owes both his past success and his present livelihood to the approval of his society, he finally conforms, returns to "reality," and renounces his former rebellions against the standards of his community.

The change from *Main Street* to *Babbitt* is essentially a change of perspective. In *Main Street*, Lewis and his heroine saw society from the outside—in *Babbitt*, from the inside. The sharp-

ness of the contrast between "ideal" freedom and "reality" therefore has become blunted, and the value of the "aspirations" themselves dubious. Babbitt's friend, Paul Riesling, has shot his wife—is friendship for a criminal good? Babbitt's real estate office has prospered by connivance with graft—who is he to cast the first stone? Radicals are "reds," and therefore un-American—is not friendship with them traitorous? And his "romance" with the bohemian Tanis was obviously an escape from his own dull marriage. Therefore the rebellious and romantic idealism of George F. Babbitt seems not only fore-defeated, but confused. The greatness of the book is that this confusion reveals itself without the apparent intervention of the author. But the weakness of the book is that the author seems to share the confusion.

Just as *Babbitt* described the life of a typical real estate salesman, so Arthur Miller's recent tragic drama describes *The Death of a Salesman*. A comparison of the two is revealing. Both George Babbitt and Willy Loman are confused in their standards—both dream empty dreams, commit adultery, condone dishonesty. But where Babbitt exists in a society where all values are confused, and men succeed chiefly by dishonesty, the confusion of Willy Loman is contrasted with the clear standards of his neighbors, which bring success. The tragic flaw in Babbitt is also that of his society, but the tragic flaw of Loman is that he has mistaken the compromises of his society for its true standards. In *Babbitt*, "reality" seems to deny idealism; but in *Death of a Salesman* reality includes idealism, denying only false dreams. The fault of *Babbitt* is that its author seems to accept the standards (or lack of them) of his hero as the American norm, or, to put it differently,

that Lewis equates the very confusion of that American society which he describes, with "Reality."

Arrowsmith, however, seemed to overcome this fault, and to refute this criticism. The "quality of suspended freedom" which Carol Kennicutt had failed fully to realize, and which Babbitt had renounced, Martin Arrowsmith now realized to the full. The American idealism which Lewis and his earlier characters had sought constantly in different ways—Lewis himself in Helicon Hall, Mr. Wrenn in European travel, Carl Ericson in the romance of aviation, Una Golden in an independent career, Carol Kennicutt in cultural reform, and Babbitt in romantic rebellion—all this idealism Lewis now concentrated in the character of Martin Arrowsmith. Alone among his idealistic heroes, Arrowsmith achieved a measure of success, and even of greatness (Mr. DeVoto to the contrary notwithstanding). And not only did this hero achieve fictional greatness, but he achieved the greatness of fiction—the novel became Lewis's best, not because it described his "best" character, but because it realized him most intensely and completely. *Arrowsmith* seemed to embody and to illustrate the ideal values of its author, and to refute the charges of confusion.

Arrowsmith remains Lewis's best novel and—I think—one of the best American novels. Like *Moby Dick* and *Huckleberry Finn*, it achieved a balance and a focus which the earlier and the later novels of these American authors lacked. Like *Moby Dick* it described a heroic quest and, like *Huckleberry Finn*, it spoke the authentic American language. Beyond both, it embodied the modern ideal of the scientist and seeker of truth in a credibly human character. But its minor flaws were also prophetic—like the inflated language of *Moby*

Dick, or the confused conclusion of *Huckleberry Finn*. In minor ways *Arrowsmith* suggested that final divorce of idealism and "reality" which was to confuse Lewis's later novels.

As his letters to his publisher repeat, Lewis intended to entitle *Arrowsmith*, "The Barbarian." From his first conception the idealistic character of his hero seemed to him somehow un-American. This pure idealism was inspired by and embodied in the German-born Professor "Gottlieb," whose absolute devotion to truth carried a conviction wholly lacking, for instance, in the later hero of *The God-Seeker*. One of the central conflicts which motivate the story is that between Martin Arrowsmith and the materialistic American society which demands immediate results from his experiments. Probably it is this excessive materialism which prompted Mr. DeVoto's charge that *Arrowsmith* gives a distorted picture of the American Public Health Service and of American research foundations in general. And certainly Arrowsmith is presented as an intransigent individualist, in conflict with American institutions which resemble Boosters Clubs rather than research foundations. The hero's devotion to scientific truth is somewhat too pure, and American society's concern with cash results somewhat too blind.

Nevertheless *Arrowsmith's* conception of scientific truth is neither "sentimental," nor "trivial." The conflict between the idealism of the scientist, and society's demand for immediate results has always been real, and was even more intense when the novel was written. Although the hero is described as an individualist, his conception of truth is in no sense trivial, nor does he ignore the social concept of science—indeed he

fails in his attempt to test his "bacteriophage" by means of scientific "control groups," precisely because he is a social being, subject to human weaknesses. When at last he resigns from the "Institute" to devote himself to private research in his cabin-laboratory, he does so without romantic illusions concerning either his own righteousness or his probable success. And on the other hand, his resignation from American "society" repeats that classic pattern of American individualistic idealism, first clearly defined by Thoreau a century earlier.

The minor flaw in the conception of *Arrowsmith*, which was to cause major confusion in the later novels of Sinclair Lewis, is the logical flaw which has lain latent in our American conception of Reality. Social "reality" had often seemed to deny "idealism." Therefore, either the idealist must reject social "reality," or he must abandon his ideals and "return to reality." In *Walden*, Thoreau rejected society, and *Arrowsmith* repeats some of his intransigence. Similarly, the heroes of *Main Street* and *Babbitt* found that society rejected their ideals as romantic, and each to a different degree abandoned his aspirations and "returned to reality." The workable concept of a Reality which includes and uses ideals in order to change society has often been ignored by American writers. In his later novels, Lewis conceived of an American "reality" which excluded romance and idealism entirely.

In contrast to *Arrowsmith*, *Elmer Gantry* described a "hero" who had adopted the opportunist compromises of his society as his ideals. Lacking the scruples of *Babbitt*, Elmer Gantry took "reality" for his God, and denounced as communistic that idealism which would try to reform society.

¹ See *From Main Street to Stockholm*.

On the other hand, *Dodsworth* carried on Babbitt's submerged idealism, and sought in Europe the culture and romance which Babbitt so signally failed to realize in America. But an alien European culture could not fill his life, and for him Europe became a desperate stop-gap. After the break-up of his marriage, he returned to his European love, without hope. And in Lewis's last novel, *World So Wide*, Dodsworth finally reappeared, leading an expatriate existence in Italy, and ironically warning the final hero against the unreality of this rootless European life.

After *Dodsworth*, Lewis won the Nobel Prize, and was hailed as the representative American writer. In his Stockholm address, he bewailed that Americans "have no standards . . . no heroes to be followed nor villains to be condemned, no certain ways to be pursued and no dangerous paths to be avoided . . . The American novelist . . . must work alone, in confusion . . ." And three years after returning to America, Lewis published *Ann Vickers* to document this confusion.

All the earlier heroes of Lewis had been idealists of a sort, and he had described their many conflicts with reality in many ways. Sometimes they had succeeded in part, more often they had failed and adjusted to reality, but always he had sympathized with them. Only when *Elmer Gantry* clearly perverted the "yearning" of American romantics did Lewis scorn his hero. Always the author's emotional sympathy with romance and his moral approval of idealism had remained clear. Now *Ann Vickers* embodied an American idealism more complete than any, except *Arrowsmith*. A feminist and social reformer, Ann lived a free life, fought social corruption in all its forms, and

sought love in the confusion of a great city. Clearly her author favored her among his heroines. But at the very end, Ann Vickers—to the consternation both of her associates and of her readers—chose to marry an ex-judge who had just been condemned for accepting graft and condoning dishonesty in office. And clearly Sinclair Lewis approved of his heroine's choice of this manly judge, who had scorned the social reformers, but now found himself beaten by them. His idealistic Ann not only renounced her earlier idealism, but fell in love with that "realism" which she had formerly condemned. In *Ann Vickers* Lewis reversed himself and rejected the idealism which had inspired *Arrowsmith*: although the idealistic reformer now triumphed, the tough realist won the heroine's love, and her author's sympathy.

Finally, *Work of Art* reversed the earlier standards of *Main Street* and *Babbitt*, and completed Lewis's confusion. Carol Kennicut had tried vainly to bring art to Gopher Prairie, and Babbitt had embodied that smug philistinism which scorns art. Now *Work of Art* set out to prove fictionally that the art of managing a hotel is just as valid as the art of painting a picture. And the idea was reasonable: if his hero had embodied that quality of imagination which creates new forms—whether of the fine arts or of business management—*Work of Art* might have become a fine novel. But Lewis's hero, although embodying perfectly the ideal of *Work*, not only lacked, but positively condemned the ideal of *Art*, or creative idealism. And Lewis's notebooks show that this denial of artistic idealism was conscious and purposeful.

The published novel tells the story of Myron Weagle, the hard-working

but unimaginative manager of a series of hotels, and his brother Ora Weagle, the romantic poet who scorns work and continually borrows money from his brother. In the published novel, Myron is the epitome of realism, in its unromantic extreme—honest and plodding, but accepting stolidly the dishonesty of the world and making the best of it. And Ora Weagle is the epitome of romanticism at its worst—dishonest and flamboyant, denouncing the world but living as a parasite upon it. At the end Myron decides, wisely (the author implies) to give up his second-rate hotel and start a motel, because that is the way the business is going. He has never created a truly fine hotel, or "work of art," but he has worked hard and gotten along, and adjusted to reality.

But Lewis's notebooks^a for *Work of Art* show that he originally conceived of his hero as an idealist who constantly planned to create the perfect hotel. Myron Weagle was to have been an artist, who, unlike his romantic brother Ora, wished to create something real. But (Lewis asked himself in his notebook), is not the "artist" who plans to create an impossibly perfect hotel, just as unrealistic as the poet who writes about impossible beauty and romance? Therefore, Lewis consciously converted his hero from an imaginative artist in hotel-making to a realistic worker in hotel-keeping. Rejecting *Art*, Sinclair Lewis idealized *Work*. And in so doing he destroyed not only the significance of this novel, with its challenging title, but of his later novels which followed this pattern. The representative American artist, renouncing vision, retreated into the fortress of

reality, and (artistically speaking) perished.

The decline and fall of Sinclair Lewis—typical American novelist—illustrates an American tragedy. The idealist, recognizing that his vision of perfection is impossible, renounces his vision and "returns to reality." Or, clinging to his ideals in spite of their certain defeat, he may become a fanatic—as in *Kingsblood Royal*; or a rootless expatriate—as in *Dodsworth* and *World So Wide*. The realist, on the other hand, denounces all idealism as romantic, because unrealizable, or because it threatens the "reality" of things as they are. In whatever form, this American tragedy of "all or nothing" exiles the idealist from reality and even declares him to be "un-American."

But the earlier novels of Sinclair Lewis—especially those which made him spokesman for his generation—described the conflict of American idealism and materialism in pragmatic or in comic terms. Though the cultural enthusiasm of Carol Kennicut was sometimes comically exaggerated, it embodied an impulse not only ideal, but pragmatically possible, so that the Main Streets of today hear more of the music and read more of the books that Carol urged. And though the scientific idealism of Arrowsmith was sometimes narrowly individualistic, his celebration of "pure science" influenced the practice even of modern industrial research, and his realization of the heroism of the "microbe hunters," even though partial, gave modern American fiction one of its few authentic heroes.

Lewis lived through "the golden half-century" of America, and realized some of its glory. But when he renounced the glory, and retreated in confusion to the fortress of reality, both he and his America became the poorer.

^a These notebooks were summarized by Henry Seidel Canby in "Sinclair Lewis's Art of Work," in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, Feb. 10, 1934.

Symbolism and the Student

Rudolph Von Abele and Walter Havighurst were two of the participants in a symposium on the title subject held at the forty-fourth annual convention of the National Council of Teachers of English, November 25-27, 1954, at Detroit. The two papers which follow are drawn from their remarks at that time.

1. RUDOLPH VON ABELE

NOT ALL teachers wish to deal with literature as if it were capable of being symbolically read; those who make it a point to do so have doubtless met with three varieties of students who make life hard for them: those who make fantastic interpretations, those who deny that interpretations are possible, and those who look upon the whole thing as another dreary trick invented to defraud them of passing grades in courses they didn't want to take. Occasionally a fourth and more congenial kind turns up: those who recognize both the values and the limits of symbolic reading.

There is, in other words, a problem in practical pedagogy, of which many teachers appear uncomfortably aware. We want to present the symbolic technique to our students in such a way as to bring as many of them as we can to behave reasonably about it. We do not want fanatics; we do not want philistines; and we would sorely prefer not to have indifferentists. It is very likely we shall not get what we want; yet we ought to make sure, in simple love of

our subject, that if we do not get what we want, it will at least not be our own fault. I do not think any moral compulsion exists upon any human being that he should like literature, or think literature important. I am sure that modern notions as to the widespread diffusion of literary culture are too ambitious to be realistic, and are fated to give great disappointment to those who put faith in them. On the other hand, I would regard him as a derelict teacher indeed who failed to proselytize to the limits of his strength, in order to win every genuine convert he could find.

Yet to speak of the problem of symbolic reading at this level suggests a bigger problem at another level. What do we mean by behaving "reasonably"? What, in fact, do we even mean by "symbolic reading"? It is plainly impossible to judge whether someone is doing something well or not unless we know what he is doing to begin with. We cannot expect others to be clear about things which to us are cloudy, or which we take without thought at face value only. To too many teachers the idea of "symbolism" is merely something of which the familiar allegory of Spenser and Bunyan is a clear-cut example, but of which they are unable to form a general idea ample enough to

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include, with Bunyan, Hemingway and Henry James. I have heard it seriously, if muddle-headedly, argued that the concept of symbolism in literature is, in a nebulous poetic sense, somehow related to "truth," and that all literature is symbolic because it is "true." But of what use is a distinction that refuses to distinguish? or that confounds one difficult term with another, yet more difficult, one, in the name of sanity and light?

We need to get away from textbook notions, and erroneous categorizings like "symbolism" and "allegory," or "simile" and "metaphor." What happens when a work of literature is read symbolically is this: the explicit content—the words on the page and their relationships—is seen as implying, more or less systematically, a latent content which the act of reading makes, as it were, manifest. I do not think that we read symbolically by choice, at least not when we are reading aright. The nature of the work compels us, and it is no more possible to read *An American Tragedy* well and read it symbolically than it is to read *Billy Budd* well and read it non-symbolically. Something is said, and by its structure it points to something which is unsaid; something else is said, but it points at nothing but itself.

I am much concerned to make clear the distinction between literary works considered as particular cases of classes of situations, and literary works considered as presentations in one language which imply presentations in another language. Clyde Griffiths, in *An American Tragedy*, may or may not be "typical" of the American social misfit; but if it be said that he is, then he is no different from the general idea; he is merely a specific instance of it. But if

we concede for the sake of argument that Billy Budd is symbolic of Adam, we cannot say that he is a specific case of Adam, and is therefore "just like" him. The structure of the story permits us to say instead that Billy Budd is re-enacting, in another time and place, the essential aspects of the story of Adam. Both Billy and Adam are innocent; and both are members of a class, that of the innocent human being before his fall; but to say this is to speak of something quite different from the fact that in the story Billy is specifically a substitute for Adam. This distinction becomes even clearer when there are fewer points of resemblance between the symbol and what it symbolizes, as in *Moby Dick*, where the White Whale may be said to symbolize Jehovah, but hardly to belong to the class to which Jehovah belongs. Of course, it might be argued that the Whale belongs to a class of Jehovah-like things, and is hence merely a specific instance; but this argument omits the fact that each Jehovah-like thing is what it is in virtue of being like Jehovah, who is not a general concept like "social misfit"; and therefore that the Whale belongs at best to a class with but two members, itself and God, and this by analogy rather than by exemplification.

Symbolic reading is a case of elucidating the implications of a context. But it is a special case. All literature is rich with implications, not all of which are symbolic. Here is a verse:

Georgie Porgie, pudding and pie,
Kissed the girls, and made them cry;
When the boys came out to play,
Georgie Porgie ran away.

That Georgie Porgie is addicted to sweets is not, if you want to split a hair or two, a matter of explicit statement; the omission of a verb makes this an

inference we have to draw. That the girls don't like to be kissed because there is something unpleasant about his sexual precocity is not explicit either. But it is an inference drawn according to the lights of some psychological doctrine. It is important to remember that the verse neither helps nor hinders the doctrine, which must find its validations elsewhere; and therefore we are under no compulsion to accept the inference as a necessary one.

Suppose we grant for the moment that the verse applies to George I. The imagery of childhood then must be translated into equivalent imagery of the mature man, so: "George I prefers boudoir to battlefield yet makes his mistresses unhappy; whenever, owing to civil exigencies, his presence is required, he evades his plain duty." This isn't all, for the very choice of imagery in which to cast the verse has its own implications: "This kind of behavior is immature, is child's play." Now when we perform an act of translation of this kind, we are reading symbolically; and if the historical reference be granted, the reading is valid enough.

But what do we mean by "reasonable" and "unreasonable" symbolic readings? We mean that it is possible to misread a given work, or to read it badly. But what does this mean? As commonly phrased, it means that instead of simply "reading" the work we "read *into*" it something that is said "not to be there." Sometimes it is also said "not to be the author's intention." Begging this last question temporarily, we may say that unreasonable symbolic reading occurs when something is imputed to a work which cannot be found in it. But by what criteria do we determine what is "in" and what is not "in" the given story, play, or poem?

The act of reading is an individual act, and literary works are notoriously full of ambiguities, and much that passes as criticism may be seen, upon close examination, to be a form of autosuggestion. And yet I do not think that we are faced with an anarchists' ball; for I do not think that anyone will ever convince me that *Hamlet* is a Rosicrucian tract. A limit exists; and where limits can be set, chaos is not utter.

Let us say that it is going beyond the limits when the language of translating from explicit to implicit content is arbitrarily imposed, or is unjustifiably applied to isolated details. All works must be regarded as in some sense totalities, which is to say wholes, rather than aggregates. This assumption must be made of even the most mediocre specimens of literary art. Every work makes a world; every work is a concretion of, and an expression of, a complex of attitudes and values. Most works, to be sure, are loose in their wholeness; very few approach the appalling coherence of *King Lear*; and yet I think the effort must be made to discover the rationales of what are after all the products of rational effort. It will be time enough for the reader to howl when his ingenuity is exhausted. Legitimate symbolic reading is that which does not inject values, attitudes, and/or concepts which cannot be found in the work to begin with; it gives legitimate photography and not montage. In Henry James' *The Tragic Muse* a young girl who plays at sculpting in her brother's studio says to a visitor that she comes there to "make her little mess" because her mother doesn't like her to do it at home. Now a fanatic would immediately begin to mutter about implicit equations between art and the faeces; but it is crystal-clear

from the context that nothing would be less germane than such a reading.

There is a book by Charles Neider which reads Kafka's books as Freudian palimpsests. I have had students eager to see in the tragedy of Oedipus a symbolic enactment of the psychoanalytic concept to which—unfortunately—he has given his name. Between Kafka and Freud is a certain congruence which is utterly lacking between Freud and Oedipus. Why? It is not primarily the fact that in the one instance we can muster some historical evidence to support our contention, whereas in the other historical arguments go by the board in favor of some kind of retroactive assumption that men are always alike. It is far more the betrayal, in proposing that Oedipus be seen in the light of Freud, of an immoderate wish to us all literature as documentation of hypotheses which have nothing to do with literature. It is also using each specific instance as both evidence and conclusion, which is a high order of logical sinning.

It is not, on the other hand, illegitimate reading to see in the rotten teeth of the younger members of the Buddenbrooks clan a symbolic manifestation of the moral decadence into which they are falling; for if the fact does not exist for this purpose it has no business in the novel at all; and its irrelevance is precluded by the way in which it is directly tied to Thomas Buddenbrooks' death. It is not unjustifiable to see Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* as a story symbolic of the attempt of the spiritually dead to achieve a rebirth by watching the folk-fiesta in Pamplona, because such a reading can be substantiated not only in terms of the overall structure of the novel, but also in those of a host of particular details. It is not

unjustifiable to see the fact that Hjalmar Ekdal, in Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, is cast as a photographer as a form of symbolic irony, because taking pictures of people and then retouching them is a kind of illusion-making which exemplifies neatly the transformation of reality which Dr. Relling believes people like Ekdal must perform in order to live. But it is unjustifiable for Robert Wooster Stallman to say that the celebrated line about the sun pasted in the sky like a wafer, in Crane's *Red Badge Of Courage*, is a symbolic prophecy of redemption; for the word "pasted" clearly shows that the wafer is not the Host but the seal affixed to a document attesting its having been completed.

To return to our students, our pedagogical problem with respect to the understanding of symbolism leads, as do all such problems, to a certain attitude about literature. If the attitude can be inculcated, the problems will be on the way toward solving themselves. The only trouble is that the attitude is very hard to inculcate. To put the work first, and always first, and absolutely first, is one part of it; to be willing to assume as I have argued that the work is not an aggregate but a structure, and that its parts therefore are not irrelevant but relevant, not meaningless but meaningful, is the other part of it. To put the work first means that the student must school himself in humility, a virtue difficult enough for saints, let alone teachers and their sometimes only-too-human charges. To assume that the work possesses integrity, and to follow this up by trying to ascertain that integrity exists therein means that the student must cultivate imaginativeness, a job only a little less difficult than that of learning humility. And yet in this way only can teacher and student alike

come at all close to attaining the impossible ideal of genuinely objective reading.

The most feasible tactical approach toward these difficult ends, I venture to think, is that of persuading students to see the reading of literary works as (what in effect it is anyhow) a game with a serious goal: the acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge of what? Primarily knowledge of the works themselves. The literary object ought, that is, to be regarded as a kind of puzzle in meanings, a façade with exciting possibilities, a labyrinth which hides a multitude. Of course most students receive from their cultural cradle the more or less opposed attitude that the literary object is something to be passively enjoyed for the sake of relaxation. That pleasure may be found in work is an abhorrent idea, at least where the arts are in question. Students are in danger of myopia, not hyperesthesia, in their dealings with literature, and the teacher's heaviest task, I am persuaded, is to push away the rock of passivity behind which so many of them are daily trained to sit—or lie. How this is to be done is a function of one's pedagogical excellence, as to the fostering of which I cannot find the formulae. The great teacher's techniques are born out of love, and are therefore inspired not learned. The greatest teacher I have known has nothing so crude that it can be called a method. His mind is acute, and his passion is strong, and these between them are enough.

I would like to return now to a question which I raised in the beginning but laid aside: what are we to say when the philistines among our students object that the symbolic readings we suggest cannot be shown to have been "intended" by the authors of the works

under contemplation? Did William Faulkner "intend," for instance, that *The Sound And The Fury* should be read as a symbolic enactment of the Passion of Our Lord? And if he did not so "intend" it, by what right may we so read it? This question in turn suggests another; but let me comment on it first. The rightful answer is that the only "intention" with which we, as readers, have any business is what might be called "intention realized," or the work as it exists in its presumably final form, not the work as it might have been had its author done other things than those he in fact did do. How do we know what he might have done? Sometimes he tells us what he is going to do, or what he is doing, or what he has done; but it is perfectly clear that all these asseverations yield precedence to the work itself. It is true that we may make inferences from a work's characteristics as to the motives out of which it was composed; but here intention, or "motive," is wholly derivative from the testimony of the text, which is the court of first as well as of last resort. Perhaps the author may have said that he intended to write a tragedy; and if we find that he did not we may say that from his own point of view he failed. Yet from our point of view he may have succeeded in doing something quite different, and just as valuable. Because a hit-and-run driver protests that his intention was not to kill his victim, we do not therefore say that the victim is not dead.

The suggestion that the author's interpretation of his own work may differ from that of the reader implies that readers, too, may differ among themselves. What then? Does the possibility of plural readings of the same work break down the argument that readings

may be justifiable and unjustifiable? I think not. I have said that the ideal of an "objective" reading is impossible, and so it is; at least, it becomes more impossible the more complex the work in question happens to be. What seem like plural readings, of equal validity, may not be so much plural as partial. We readers come together, as it were, holding our various partial meanings like pieces of a puzzle in our hands. The continual danger is that we should see them, in the pride of discovery, as more than partial, save where works of a low order of complexity are concerned. It is not hard to exhaust the meaning of Hawthorne's *Young Goodman Brown*. But on the other hand, the real problems of apparently rival and justifiable interpretation arise only with the great works; for only the great works are able to generate such problems.

The difficulties involved in bringing about fruitful encounters between students and works of literature are always fundamentally the same, whether the works concerned are symbolically or nonsymbolically fashioned. To all but a very few, that literature is able to do more than merely amuse is perpetually

an occasion for astonishment; that its explicit content should be capable of implying a latent content is not much more fantastic than this. The main thing is that students should be persuaded that the endeavor at disinterested reading is worth the effort it ordinarily takes. Literature is valuable for many reasons, among which is the chance it gives the mind to take cognizance of a limited thing through the performance of a ritual which removes it from the intolerances of whatever is merely personal. And if the thing be only great enough, such cognizance becomes accompanied by that generic awe which is, I am convinced, the only genuine esthetic emotion, and which resembles the awe with which the fortunate prince contemplated Sleeping Beauty in her castle. To awaken such awe is in my view the greatest kindness a teacher can do his students. But how he does it is his own affair; the only qualities that cannot be denied are disinterestedness, humility, imagination; the most difficult of qualities to possess; the most difficult to impart to others.

2. WALTER HAVIGHURST

MY COMMENT ON Mr. Von Abele's remarks is "Hear! Hear!" I heartily concur with him in insisting that symbols exist, and exist only, *in context*.

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Morning does not always mean youth; it may mean just a time of day. Winter sometimes is intended to suggest death, but it can also be the coldest season. Snow is literal in Jack London but symbolical in Joyce. The only fair and proper way to read is to consider the *entire work*, with respect for a writer's art and response to his intention.

The writer's intention—Here I have a difference with Mr. Von Abele. Instead of dismissing that intention as something that cannot be tracked and is

ambiguous and irrelevant anyway, I believe that awareness of the writer's intention, in matters both large and small, is the basis of valid reading. The act of reading, which calls upon mind, memory, and emotion, is as personal as the act of writing, and no readers will find precisely the same things in a work of literature. But this cannot mean that a poem or a story is an elaborate ink-blot, signifying only what it evokes in a reader's consciousness. A work of literature is a person-to-person communication. It is the business of the writer to have an intention and to make his intention known. If he is successful he does make it known, not only by his context but by his feeling, his overtones, his point of view. "Seat thyself sultanically among the moons of Saturn," says Ishmael in *Moby-Dick*, "and take a high abstracted man alone; and he seems a wonder, a grandeur, and a woe. But . . . take mankind in mass, and for the most part they seem a mob of unnecessary duplicates, both contemporary and hereditary." Here are the alternatives, and Melville leaves no doubt as to his intention. Nor does a Zola or a Dreiser, taking the other view of man. Symbolic meanings grow out of the intention. Melville hoped that no one would read *Moby-Dick* as a "damned allegory," but he made it impossible to read as a *Two Years Before the Mast*.

A teacher and a student have the same concern; it is to find what a work of literature contains, not what can be injected into it. Modern criticism has encouraged close and perceptive reading, but close reading is in error when it takes the work away from the author. I have an objection to textbook anthologies which follow each selection with elaborate critical analysis—some-

times longer than the literary work itself. Such exegesis asks a student to believe that the story in itself is not complete, that the author needs a commentator to make his meaning understood. We are believers in literature; we want to make ardent and perceptive readers of our students. Let us not lead them to believe that literature requires official interpretation, or to regard reading as an exercise of ingenuity. Reading is an exercise of understanding, and is there anything more important than the author's intention for our students to understand? When we respect the writer's intention we do not work upon the reading but we let the reading work upon us. This can be put very simply, as Robert Frost has put it: "Don't press the metaphor, let it press you."

This is the extent of my argument, and I think that in considering the *entire work* one best honors and apprehends the writer's intention. So I come back to stand with Mr. Von Abele. But I want to go over the ground again, by a different route, making some elementary observations and using some specific instances in an attempt to take hold of this slippery subject.

I say slippery because all literature is symbolic—from the single word to the entire and single work—and students may find that while they grasp at one kind of symbol another kind or degree of symbolism eludes them. The students I am thinking of are undergraduates, and not all English majors. We would like to make good readers of them, and so we want them to discover the symbolic nature of all literary art.

Literature, we are accustomed to say, is more than life. A work of fiction—even the most naturalistic—is more than a fragment of experience; it suggests something beyond itself. *An*

American Tragedy, even by its title, is something more than *The Unfortunate Case of Clyde Griffiths*. It is a portrait of a youth swept to destruction by the chaotic materialism of modern society; it depicts the tragedy of life as Dreiser saw it in America. Clyde Griffiths' story is not his story only.

All fiction suggests things beyond itself; it is figurative as well as literal. But it is not all figurative in equal measure. The figurative exists in varying degrees, as suits the mind and intention of the writer. When we use the terms Realism, Symbolism, Allegory, we distinguished three degrees of figurative narration. These distinctions can help our students see that though fiction is always picturing some portion of the world it is not always picturing it in the same way.

I take first the extreme form of the figurative in fiction, which we call Allegory, choosing an exhibit from Hawthorne's story "The Celestial Railroad."

At the end of the valley, as John Bunyan mentions, is a cavern, where, in his days, dwelt two cruel giants, Pope and Pagan, who had strown the ground about their residence with the bones of slaughtered pilgrims. These vile old troglodytes are no longer there; but into their deserted cave another terrible giant has thrust himself, and makes it his business to seize upon honest travellers and fatten them for his table with plentiful meals of smoke, mist, moonshine, raw potatoes, and sawdust. He is German by birth, and is called Giant Transcendentalist; but as to his form, his features, his substance, and his nature generally, it is the chief peculiarity of this huge miscreant that neither he for himself, nor anybody for him, has ever been able to describe them. As we rushed by the cavern's mouth we caught a hasty glimpse of him, looking somewhat like an ill-proportioned figure, but considerably more like a heap of fog and duskiness. He shouted after us, but in so strange a phraseology that we knew

not what he meant, nor whether to be encouraged or affrighted.

In Allegory the story means something other than itself; its whole purpose is to call forth the suggested meaning. The terms are concrete—here, a cavern, a giant, and some passing travelers. But the concrete terms exist for the sake of abstract meanings. The allegorist even identifies his specific details as metaphors of abstractions: the hill Difficulty, the slough of Despond, the dungeon of Despair, the key of Scripture. So, Bunyan's allegory—which Hawthorne was applying—is a story about a man who is not a man, but humanity; who makes a journey which is not a journey, but life; toward a city which is not a city, but Salvation. In all allegory, from Aesop to George Ade, or from Bunyan to Kafka, a thin and transparent actual exists not for itself but for what it represents. The surface narrative projects a background meaning.

I take next the least figurative form of fiction, which we call Realism. In the realistic story characters and situations are so true in themselves that they bear inevitable resemblance to many other characters and situations. Here is a brief example, a fragment from Frank O'Connor's story "The Uprooted," in which a young Irishman goes home from Dublin to his father's cottage on the wild west coast, and finds that he cannot recover the simple and precious past.

"No," Ned said gravely. "We made our choice a long time ago. We can't go back on it now."

Then with his hands in his trouser pockets and his head bowed he went out to the kitchen. His mother, the colored shawl about her head, was blowing the fire. The bedroom door was open and he could see his father in shirtsleeves kneeling beside the

bed, his face raised reverently towards a holy picture, his braces hanging down behind. He unbolted the half-door, went through the garden and out onto the road. There was a magical light on everything. A boy on a horse rose suddenly against the sky, a startling picture. Through the apple-green light over Carriganassa ran long streaks of crimson, so still they might have been enamelled. Magic! Magic! Magic! He saw it as in a children's picture-book with all its colors intolerably bright; something he had outgrown and could never return to, while the world he aspired to was as remote and intangible as it had seemed even in the despair of youth.

It seemed as if only now for the first time he was leaving home; for the first time and forever saying good-bye to it all.

Here the actual has intrinsic interest; it is what the author is writing about. Ned Keating has his own personal past, on this seacoast farm where he had discovered the spell of books and so outgrew that primitive background; he has his own personal present in the barren life of Dublin. He spends two days in the scene of his boyhood, and at the end, about to return to Dublin, he knows, for the first time, the meaning of his choice and the completeness of his separation. This is precisely and intensely what the author is saying, and yet there is something more. The story casts a shadow. It is accompanied by a realization that extends beyond a Dublin school teacher who spends a weekend at his father's farm. The story emphasizes feelings that are common to many persons who look back at a simple past they cannot recover. Ned Keating's visit to his father's cottage illustrates the futility, indeed the impossibility, of going "home" to memory. Its meaning extends even, as O'Connor once indicated, to an industrial society or an intellectual culture that cannot reclaim lost simplicities. This story exists of and for it-

self; it is a truly observed and sharply rendered fragment of experience. But its actual and explicit terms evoke larger recognitions. It lets us see the general in the particular. This is assuredly Ned Keating's story, but it suggests all life that grows complex and worldly and, recalling the charm of a simpler state, tries unsuccessfully to return to the rewarding past.

I come now to the central subject of this discussion, the symbolic story. It represents a middle degree of the figurative, between Allegory and Realism. In the symbolic story the writer means what he says and he means also something which he suggests. His details have both an explicit and an implicit meaning. Here is a passage from E. M. Forster's story "The Road from Colonus," in which we see a tired and aging Englishman traveling through Greece.

At the present moment, here he was in Greece, and one of the dreams of his life was realized. Forty years ago he had caught the fever of Hellenism, and all his life he had felt that could he but visit that land, he would not have lived in vain. But Athens had been dusty, Delphi wet, Thermopylae flat, and he had listened with amazement and cynicism to the rapturous explanations of his companions. Greece was like England: it was a man who was growing old, and it made no difference whether that man looked at the Thames or the Eurotas. It was his last hope of contradicting that logic of experience, and it was failing.

Yet Greece had done something for him, though he did not know it. It had made him discontented, and there are stirrings of life in discontent. He knew that he was not the victim of continual ill-luck. Something great was wrong, and he was pitted against no mediocre or accidental enemy. For the last month a strange desire had possessed him to die fighting.

"Greece is the land for young people," he said to himself as he stood under the plane trees, "but I will enter into it, I will

possess it. Leaves shall be green again, water shall be sweet, the sky shall be blue. They were so forty years ago, and I will win them back. I do mind being old, and I will pretend no longer."

He took two steps forward, and immediately cold waters were gurgling over his ankle.

"Where does the water come from?" he asked himself. "I do not even know that." He remembered that all the hillsides were dry; yet here the road was suddenly covered with flowing streams.

This Englishman has come from an arid life in London, a life of small pursuits, petty complaints, and gnawing dissatisfactions. Now he is in Greece, not traveling so much as making a pilgrimage, seeking a lost ardor and a dimly remembered harmony. The intensity of his search is his success—for a little while. In an arid landscape, symbolic of his past life in London, he comes suddenly upon a green valley and a stream of living water. This water in a dry land is truly that: the succeeding incidents in the story center on the little farm, the roadside inn, and the simple people who live beside the flowing water. But, equally, the water in a dry land symbolizes the quickness and freshness of life that has come to Mr. Lucas in his pilgrimage. This writing means what it says; it also means, with equal definition, another thing which it suggests.

At the outset of his short story "Odour of Chrysanthemums" D. H. Lawrence paints a Nottinghamshire landscape with figures:

The small locomotive engine, Number 4, came clanking, stumbling down from Selston with seven full wagons. It appeared round the corner with loud threats of speed, but the colt that it startled from among the gorse, which still flickered indistinctly in the raw afternoon, outdistanced it at a canter. A woman, walking up the railway

line to Underwood, drew back into the hedge, held her basket aside, and watched the footplate of the engine advancing. The trucks thumped heavily past, one by one, with slow inevitable movement, as she stood insignificantly trapped between the jolting black wagons and the hedge; then they curved away towards the coppice where the withered oak leaves dropped noiselessly, while the birds, pulling at the scarlet hips beside the track, made off into the dusk that had already crept into the spinney. In the open, the smoke from the engine sank and cleaved to the rough grass. The fields were dreary and forsaken, and in the marshy strip that led to the whimsey, a reedy pit-pond, the fowls had already abandoned their run among the alders, to roost in the tarred fowl-house. The pit-bank loomed up beyond the pond, flames like red sores licking its ashy sides, in the afternoon's stagnant light. Just beyond rose the tapering chimneys and the clumsy black headstocks of Brinsley Colliery. The two wheels were spinning fast up against the sky, and the winding-engine rapped out its little spasms. The miners were being turned up.

Here is a picture of hill and meadow, of railway, slagheap, and mine shed. In the center of the picture we see a woman standing between a black train of coal cars and a green hedgerow. Lawrence lingers over that detail, accenting it until a reader sees its meaning; he even says that she is "insignificantly trapped" between the train and the hedge. This is his symbolic picture of the modern dilemma in which humanity stands immobilized between nature and industrial civilization. Again and again a story writer persuades the reader to see as he sees, to recognize as symbol what might be regarded as bare fact.

A story's largest symbolism is the story itself, the entire work casting an enlarging shadow of meaning. We are accustomed to say that all literature is representative. In the measure that a story represents something beyond its

explicit statement, it is figurative. The action occurs once, in one time and place to one set of persons, but its meaning widens out to many other situations. The story tells of a limited happening and of an unlimited meaning which that happening embodies. The fiction writer is always doing two things at once. He is reporting human experience and he is reflecting upon it; he is constructing a narrative and he is also animating an idea. In his fiction he has, as we put it, something to say. Perhaps history contains particular symbolic details, or perhaps all its details are literal and explicit. But the memorable story has meaning as a whole; it is itself a metaphor.

In the opening of his story "Youth" Conrad's narrator tells his listeners: "You know there are certain voyages that seem ordered for the illustration of life, that might stand for a symbol of existence." There are certain stories—perhaps they are the best stories—that seem similarly ordered. After reading Crane's "The Open Boat" Conrad said: "The deep and simple humanity of its presentation seems somehow to illustrate the essentials of life itself, like a symbolic tale." He saw the tale of shipwrecked men struggling to reach shore as a symbolic account of humanity's struggle to endure in the vast and indifferent world. Because he meant his own "Youth" to be such a symbolic tale, Conrad objected to calling it a sea story. The sea is its circumstance, but the story is a portrayal of the genius of youth for transmuting hardship and peril into glamor and romance. Thus the story writer becomes a maker of metaphor.

This seems to me the most rewarding discovery for any reader, and the most important realization that we can share

with our students. Not the part but the whole, the entire work perceived as a metaphor of human experience. Of course all stories are not equally thematic and symbolic, but every story, being representative, contains something larger than itself. This is the author's intention, and it is not recognized by ingenuity but by understanding.

William Faulkner's most familiar story, the often-reprinted short version of "The Bear," contains an unusually candid statement of the writer's double interest in explicit event and implicit meaning. After the fierce and chivalrous hunt, following his encounter with the enormous bear, the boy comes into his father's study. His father crosses the room in the spring twilight and takes down a book from the shelves. "Listen," he says, and in his quiet voice he reads the five stanzas of a poem about the figures on an antique Grecian urn. The boy waits, and at the end the father says again, "Listen," and he reads again: "She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss; for ever wilt thou love, and she be fair."

The poem seems far indeed from a bear hunt, or anything else that concerns him, and the boy is puzzled. He says, "He's talking about a girl." His father explains: "He had to talk about something," and then he adds, "He was talking about truth. Truth doesn't change. It covers all things which touch the heart—honor and pride and pity and justice and courage and love. Do you see now?"

At last the boy does see. The incident has found its meaning, and from this hour the two will be inseparable in his memory.

One reason for the perennial appeal of this story is that here Faulkner has

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Technological Change and the Humanities Curriculum

PATRICK D. HAZARD

TECHNOLOGICAL change and the humanities curriculum? The very suggestion—that a developing technics will exert a profound and consistent pressure on the humanities curriculum—has a faintly ridiculous tone. For our special prejudices as teachers in the humanities dispose us to think of our subject matter as fundamentally opposed to technology. This is to say, the idiosyncrasies of our academic cave persuade us to a series of facile dichotomies: the humanities are an island of sanity in a morass of technological insanity; the humanities develop the whole man; the humanities are a reservoir of stable values in a civilization badgered by an unassimilated series of technical innovations. Technology stresses the mechanical; the humanities develop the imaginative. With technology we associate the clinical, the standardized, the commercial; with the humanities, the sympathetic, the individual, the esthetic. The end result of the first series is the one-eyed televiewer; the proud product of the second, a contemporary counterpart of Doctor Johnson. There is just enough truth in this vision to blind us to its larger falseness.

And this distrust of the businessman and technician as inimical to culture has roots deep in American experience.

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The frontier, Jacksonian vulgarity, the Gilded Age, Babbitt, and the ad-copy conformity of the present—these echo the theme that, in America, practical accomplishment is what counts. Art, in this mythos, is for the ladies and expatriates. And, indeed, as the “custodians” of culture in America, we have seldom operated in what might be called an encouraging atmosphere. We act the way we feel: just another generation of dedicated people fighting a delaying action against the vulgar masses. Our tradition reminds us that we are “defenders” of the humanities.

For these and other reasons, then, we view with skepticism the possibility that business technology has anything to offer our own specialty. Coexistence sounds too much like the appeasement of vulgarity. This condition of armed truce no longer fits all the facts. In the writer's opinion, important changes have taken place in the patronage of the arts in America largely because of business and technology. These changes, further, are major contributions to the power of the humanities in our national life. Our previous experience with the cruder excesses of business and technology has prevented us from seeing and cooperating with, in any thoroughgoing way, these new developments. This paper describes, in an introductory fashion, some of these new modes of patronage. It also suggests ways in which humanists might contribute to the effectiveness of these changes. Though it may appear too

uncritical of certain phases of these new media of esthetic communication—sensational advertising, for example, the reader should remember that we are usually well aware of these negative tendencies. Moreover, we are in no position to criticize until we have done our best to encourage the positive factors. And there are many.

For technology—through innovations in paperback book publication, LP recording processes, and color reproduction methods; and business—through its creation of new methods of distribution: the ubiquitous pocket-book rack and the book, record, and portfolio of the month clubs; have revolutionized the patterns of art patronage in the United States. These developments have taken place largely since World War II; their end is not in sight. Above all else these factors in the mass reproduction revolution need what only the imaginative and unstinting cooperation of the humanities faculties can give: stability and a sense of direction. In return, we can expect unmatched resources in new reproductions of literature, art, and music.

I. *New Patterns in the Patronage of Literature*

Most teachers know and appreciate the inexpensive reprints of the classics made available by such firms as Harpers, Regnery, Modern Library, and Rinehart. It confirms the thesis of this paper to recall that these long established lines are excellent examples of how technological change can aid the humanities. The new patterns—the paperback revolution, the appearance of quality literature in mass circulation magazines, book clubs, and the record-

ing of literature on film and record—promise greater riches founded on new production and distribution techniques developed by our businessmen and scientists.

Noteworthy in the paperback revolution was the appearance of paperback anthologies devoted to the best in current writing. *New World Writing* (MN)* has reached its sixth semi-annual issue; *Discovery* (PB), its fourth; and *Stories in the Modern Manner* (AV) and *Modern Writing* (AV) have had two issues each. Rolfe Humphries edited *New Poems by American Poets* (BB), a highly successful attempt to bring contemporary poetry of high quality to a mass audience. *American Accent* (BB) uses the paperback form to bring fourteen stories by members of Bread Loaf Writer's Conference to a larger audience. The last two are examples of the Ballantine plan of publishing originals simultaneously in hard and soft cover editions. *Six Great Modern Short Novels* (DL) contains work by Faulkner, Joyce, Melville, Gogol, Porter, and Wescott; *Short Story Masterpieces* (DL) is what one might expect from its editors, Robert Penn Warren and Albert Erskine. Finally, it is interesting to note what happens when scholar and paperback meet, as in the Penguin series. The two most recent examples are Marcus Cunliffe, *The Literature of the United States* (PN) and first volume in a new series edited by Boris Ford, *The Age of Chaucer* (PN). It is ironic to find, in the case of the former, an Englishman writing a highly literate survey of American literature—a use to which an American scholar

* For paperback publishers see code used in "Key to Paperbound Editions Listed," *Good Reading* (Mentor, November, 1954), p. 207.

has not yet put a paperback. The new series, called a layman's guide to English literature, will contain seven volumes: *The Age of Chaucer*, *The Age of Shakespeare*, *From Donne to Marvell*, *From Dryden to Johnson*, *From Blake to Byron*, *From Dickens to Hardy*, *The Present Age*. The format of the volumes include an account of the social context of literature, a literary survey of the period, detailed studies of some of the chief writers, and an appendix of essential facts for reference purposes. The first volume includes an anthology of medieval verse.

That American scholars are beginning to use this new means of communication is apparent in Sculley Bradley's recent edition of *Leaves of Grass* (MN), Oscar Williams' *The Pocketbook of Modern Verse* (PB), and John Ciardi's new translation of *The Inferno* (MN). Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* (MN) may be taken as example of material available in reprint. The Society of American Historians, Inc., whose membership of 400 writers of history is interested in a wider diffusion of historical materials and ideas among the general public, has gained considerable success in its first paperback, *The World of History* (MN), an omnibus of historical writing by many prominent historians. *The Uses of the Past* (MN) by Herbert J. Muller and *The Shaping of the Modern Mind* (MN) by Crane Brinton are typical of values to be found in historical reprints. *The Wonderful World of Books* (MN) and *Good Reading: A Guide to the World's Best Books* (MN) are useful volumes to stimulate and guide the newly interested. The November, 1954 edition of the latter is especially important for its new comprehensive checklist of the best

paperbound books. This checklist is twenty-five pages long and is divided topically. This list includes in its coverage the important new middle price range paperbacks, Anchor Books, Meridian Books, and Vintage Books.

Another new pattern in the patronage of good literature in contemporary America is the publication of mature work in the mass circulation magazines. The appearance of a Hemingway novella in *Life* is just a most spectacular instance in a general development. *Harper's* and *Atlantic* consistently publish work of high quality in fiction, poetry, and non-fiction. More heartening is the regularity with which serious writing is found in the fashion magazines: *Harper's Bazaar*, *Mademoiselle*, *Charm*, and similar outlets. Paperback and magazine come together in *Saturday Review Reader #3* (BN), an excellent introduction for the general college student. This issue is particularly useful because of its essays on the theme of the common man and the mass media. *Harper's* and *Atlantic* have also published readers in this format—in effect, trial subscriptions at a price that permits inclusion in a variety of English curricula.

The book clubs and related activities take advantage of a highly efficient postal service to distribute books at considerable savings to the subscriber. For example, recently, the Book-of-the-Month Club offered the following to prospective members: Lindbergh's *The Spirit of St. Louis*, Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, Cousteau's *The Silent World*, Costain's *The Silver Chalice*, Paton's *Too Late the Phalarope*, Herzog's *Annapurna*, Johnson's two-volume *Dickens*, and Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny*. This is a respectable, if not an exalted, level of taste. And for

those with higher aspirations, there is plenty of room for upward movement in the other book clubs. Book Find, Seven Arts Book Society, History Book Club, American History Publication Society, and Readers' Subscription are among the more specialized audiences assembled through efficient and imaginative use of the mails in book salesmanship. Marboro Books distribute remainders and odds and ends by the same methods, usually at considerable savings. Perhaps the humanities could make the existence of such outlets more generally known.

The mechanical preservation of literature by film and record is an asset long known by members of the NCTE. Teaching Films Custodians and the NCTE's poetry records are time-tested adjuncts to many literature programs. The developments along this line are equally exciting. Television's achievements now include *Hamlet*, *Richard II*, and *Macbeth*. Maurice Evans' *Richard II* has been made available on free kinescopes for school use. It is available from the Institute of Visual Training, Inc., 40 East 49 Street, New York 17. The Schwann LP Catalog, available from most retail record dealers, is a most valuable source of recorder plays and poetry. Recent entries under its "Spoken and Miscellaneous" section include the Classic Theatre Guild's series of plays, contemporary work by Eliot, Arthur Miller, Christopher Fry, and performances of various of Shakespeare's plays. One of the major projects of the Caedmon Publishers for fall, 1954 is "a four-record set called 'Monuments of English Drama,' in which are acted major dramatic works beginning with the *Quem Quaeritis*, through *Everyman*, *The Second Shepherd's Play*, *Gorboduc* and a number

of others, including Abraham and Isaac, and concluding with the Spanish Tragedy and *Faustus*." Caedmon is outstanding for its pioneer work in recording not only drama and poetry but also fiction. Columbia Literary Series contains twelve LP's of the outstanding literary figures. Folkways is creating a reputation for imaginative material in this field: witness its recent "Anthology of Negro Poets" edited by Anna Bontemps and read by the poets themselves. In effect, the Schwann LP Catalog will become to the teacher of literature what Lewis Leary's volume has become for the scholar of American literature—an indispensable aid.

Paperbacks, the appearance of quality work in magazines of wide circulation, book clubs and mail order schemes, and mechanical methods of recording literary performances are among the most heartening facts of cultural life in contemporary America. It seems only natural that teachers in the humanities will do everything possible to finish what businessmen and technicians have started.

II. New Patterns in the Patronage of Art

The situation in the visual arts is similar. For example, an excellent paperback on the history of Western art has just appeared. Bernard Myers, *Fifty Great Artists* (BN) is a survey of "Six Centuries of Art from Giotto to Picasso." Highly praised by art historians and critics, it contains over 100 full-page reproductions, sixteen of them in full color. Two issues of a paperback anthology, *Seven Arts* (PE) have appeared. These collections contain writings by men of the stature of Thomas Mann, Frank Lloyd Wright,

Aaron Copland, William Carlos Williams and Gian-Carlo Menotti. In the words of the editor, Fernando Puma, the collections provide "an exciting opportunity to read valuable and provocative articles by the foremost leaders in the world of painting, sculpture, music, literature, dance, theatre and architecture." The first volume contained, in addition to over 200 pages of text, forty-eight pages of black and white plates of sculpture, architecture, photography, and painting.

The Pocket Library of Great Art (PB) is a new series of pocket-size art books that sell for fifty cents. Degas, El Greco, Toulouse-Lautrec, Renoir, Matisse, Cezanne, Botticelli, the French Impressionists, Dufy, Van Gogh, Utrillo, and Rembrandt were the first titles; many more have since appeared. The first titles met with such success that the series is now planned as a continuous operation. The *Nation's* art critic has described them well:

These superb little books give many times their value in their texts, abundance of illustrations, and the quality and size of their twenty color plates, six of which double or even treble the size of the page by use of the double spread or the folded sheet. There are twenty supplementary illustrations of excellent quality in black and white. (October 10, 1953, p. 296.)

Each volume is edited by an outstanding authority, indicating that mass production and distribution need not imply vulgarization if the scholar and critic are willing to interpret their special knowledge for a non-specialized audience.

Marboro Book Shops have launched another type of mass distribution program. Fourteen paintings were chosen for reproduction from the Louvre. Modigliani, Renoir, Rouault, Van

Gogh, Lautrec, Monet, Vlaminck, Dufy, Utrillo, Matisse, Picasso, and Cezanne are represented. Most of the paintings are approximately 20" \times 24", in full color; the rest vary slightly from these dimensions. These color reproductions are available by mail order for two dollars each. Here again technology and business combine to provide the average American with an exciting opportunity for patronage.

Another popularization of classic paintings that deserves the support of the humanities faculties in mass education is the Metropolitan Miniature series. Each volume in the series contains twenty-four post-card size reproductions that the buyer mounts in an album with text. For each six volumes purchased, an attractive filing box is provided. Quite often this series is topically organized: "Children in Art," "Six Centuries of Flower Painting," "Three American Water Colorists," "Great European Portraits," "The Story of Christ," "Japanese Prints," "Medieval Vista," "Italian Renaissance Painting," "Persian Painting," and "American Folk Art." These albums fit the standard opaque projector, and the topical organization makes some of them excellent supplementary material for certain phases of English and American literary history. Each volume costs \$1.25 and postage; the subscriber has no selection.

Art Treasures of the World has started an even more impressive venture. Here the formula is a portfolio of sixteen color reproductions, individually mounted on 11" \times 15" matting paper ready for framing. An eminent critic has described the quality of reproduction as "miraculous." Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Picasso, Modigliani, Cezanne, Gauguin, El Greco, and Tou-

louse-Lautrec are among the first artists presented. Added features are analyses of individual paintings and a separate "Art Appreciation Course" prepared monthly by outstanding art educators. Each portfolio costs three dollars; the subscriber has complete freedom of purchase.

Even the reproduction of three dimensional objects is coming within the range of the average purchaser. According to Francis Henry Taylor, writing in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's catalog, *Sculpture Reproductions*, this new dimension in the democratization of art patronage is also based on a technical advance:

In 1946 a new process for sculpture reproduction was adopted by the Museum. In addition to making many objects available for reproduction that could not have been cast before, this process makes it possible to achieve the greatest accuracy of detail in reproduction and to make an exact and sensitive recreation of the original sculpture.

A brief text prepared by a member of the staff provides a description and history of the original Museum sculpture. Similar sculpture reproductions can be obtained from Museum Pieces, an organization that is not limited to the work of the Metropolitan but includes many more. Its work retails by mail at prices from two to seventy-five dollars. Contemporary Arts, a Boston firm, specializes in outstanding modern sculpture.

Not only are the possibilities of patronizing the classic arts being broadened, but also an entirely new consciousness of good design in everyday objects is being disseminated by the mass circulation magazines. Side by side with the *Life* and *Time* color reproductions of art masterpieces and feature stories on all phases of art his-

tory will be found advertisements of and articles about well designed articles of everyday use. *Art News*, sensing the importance of this philosophy to the visual environment of industrial America, has inaugurated its "Design Portfolio." The first two issues of this feature have been devoted to advertising art and political cartooning. The Walker Art Center continues to publish its excellent *Design* (formerly *Everyday Art*) *Quarterly*. Hallmark Cards again last year commissioned artists like Saul Steinberg to do Christmas cards for the mass market. Again the British are ahead of us in this respect: Penguin has started an excellent series called "The Things We See," with volumes on houses, public transport, and ships, among others. Finally, the Associated American Artists Galleries should be mentioned as an example of the creative personalities' banding together to develop a more conscious art patronage in America. This organization distributes original work in lithographs, etching, experimental media, tiles, and Christmas cards. If we are slow to respond to the businessman and technician, surely we ought to cooperate with these overtures of the artist.

III. New Patterns in the Patronage of Music

What color reproduction techniques have done for the devotee of the visual arts, vinyl plastic has done for the music lover. The first new development is the emergence of the so-called bargain labels. Often not perfect in tone, and featuring second run artists and orchestras, these new labels still have the undeniable merit of bringing great music, adequately played, within reach

of everyman's budget. Some of the labels with widest distribution are Varsity, Royale, Allegro, Gramophone, Plymouth, Parade, and Remington. Established companies, in response to this new competition, have produced cheaper labels to the ultimate benefit of the patron. RCA's new Camden label, made by dubbing 78 masters on LP discs, thus brings top flight artists and orchestras under pseudonyms to a larger consumer public. Consult the complete listings in Schwann catalog for developments in a rapidly expanding field.

Another new mode of patronage corresponds to the book clubs. First, there is the American Recording Society, made possible by a grant from the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University. It serves to redress the overemphasis of the commercial firms on the three B's by recording "200 Years of American Music." Its formula of distribution is an occasional brochure explaining its current selection, accompanied by a card to be returned by uninterested subscribers. Its selections are largely 12" LP's, high fidelity records manufactured by RCA's Custom Record Division. A record costs five dollars plus postage, with a free bonus for every two records purchased. This scheme warrants support because of its attempt to create a literate audience for indigenous music.

Music Treasures of the World distributes high fidelity 12" LP's for three dollars and postage. Each month the subscriber may decide from program notes whether or not he wishes the current selection. Regardless of his decision he receives a helpful essay on "How to Appreciate Music" plus biographies of the composer or composers of the forthcoming recordings. Planned

for this series are the most popular of the standard classics.

Music Appreciation Records is a new plan sponsored by the Book-of-the-Month Club. On one side of a high fidelity record there is a full performance of a great musical work, just as on an ordinary record; on the other side is an illuminating analysis of the music, with the various themes and other main features of the work played separately with running explanatory comment, so that the listener can learn what to listen for in order to appreciate the work fully. Each month the new selection will be described by Deems Taylor. No specified number of purchases is required of the subscriber. The Standard Record, a 12" LP with performance and analysis, will sell to subscribers only for about four dollars including postage. Since many of the records will be from familiar often recorded works, an Analysis-Only Record on a 10" disc will be available for \$2.40 plus postage. This type of imaginative cooperation between teacher-analysts and distributor is a hopeful sign of what may begin to happen when it is finally recognized that business and culture are not necessarily incompatible.

A greater range of selections may be had from another mail order plan, The Musical Masterpiece Society. Basically, its format is the distribution of lists of available recordings accompanied by order blanks. Recently, it has begun a monthly selection plan similar in operation to Music Treasures and Music Appreciation. The size, however, is 10" LP; the price, \$1.50 plus postage; the recordings generally lesser known works. The competition of these various plans ultimately benefits the consumer—if he is aware of their existence. It seems the natural role of the

humanities faculties to alert their students to the existence of all of these distribution schemes by listening or rental libraries for music, circulating galleries for the art, and honor payment or free rental for the paperbacks.

New technical processes and new methods of distribution—the contribution of business and technology to a maturing American culture—ought to have an impact on the humanities curriculum. And, if we stop to reflect, it is not surprising that a changing technology implies a changing humanities curriculum. The very fact that we have a humanities curriculum at all in mass education is a function of the increased leisure and income that technology has made more generally available. Indeed, mass education itself is a result of the industrial revolution. Literature, at least reprints of classic selections, could become a staple in mass education only because of cheap paper and presses. As technology masters the problems of reproducing other art forms, it is only natural that the school will include them in the curriculum.

It is because of the social results of the same industrial revolution that everyman's parlor, as it were, can become a library-concert hall-art gallery. Not only can the common man afford to spend money on these luxuries, but he also can afford to spend time on them. For the democratization of leisure is a corollary of the democratization of patronage we have been discussing. It would be an irony of the most embarrassing kind if our purported enemies—the businessmen and scientists—could momentarily outstrip us in the effectiveness of their contribution to America's cultural maturity. But they have solved with amazing vigor the gargantuan problem of de-

veloping a mass supply of great art; perhaps it is one of our most important responsibilities at present to advertise for them and develop a mass consumer base for their newly created supply. In other words, it may be that one of our major roles as humanists in the immediate future is that of introducing our students to their new roles as patrons of the arts. To do that job competently, we must first know intimately the nature and scope of the mass reproduction revolution which has been merely outlined in the foregoing pages.

Finally, if this conscious cooperation with wholesome developments in the reproduction and distribution of the great art of the past is a legitimate goal of the humanities teacher, then an even greater responsibility is as yet almost totally unformulated. For technological change has not only changed the leisure and patronage patterns for classics. It has also created new art forms which are perhaps more crucial in their control over public taste than any of the great art forms and products of previous ages. Radio, TV, the movies, mass journalism, industrial design—the so-called popular arts—are the humanities, so to speak, of mass society. Everyman is already *their* patron, albeit he is a rather untutored and disorganized one. If technological change affects humans—and it so obviously does, then it affects the humanities, or the expression of humanness. If we have a responsibility to help the common man become an intelligent patron of the classics, it seems we have an even more critical responsibility—that of making him a more intelligent patron of the popular arts. For it is a sad but accurate observation that in spite of the humanist's persistent ignoring of popular culture, it is only the hu-

manist who has the special knowledge to develop and disseminate standards in the popular arts.

Technological change, then, not only changes the ways by which the classics are patronized, it also creates new art forms and patterns for patronizing them. How we can help our students fill their multiple roles as patrons of both the classics and the emergent technological arts is *the* question confronting the humanist in contemporary America. We could make the school a clearing house for the proven excellence of the classics and a seminar for developing and disseminating standards for the popular arts. To choose only the former is to run the risk of being submerged by vulgarity; to choose only the latter is to foolishly cut oneself off from the richest human experience.

A SELECTIVE LIST OF SOURCES FOR INEXPENSIVE REPRODUCTIONS

I. LITERATURE

See *Good Reading* (November, 1954), p. 207 for comprehensive list of paperbound publishers and addresses.

See "Mass Market" section of *Publisher's Weekly* for lists of new titles.

Book Clubs.

American History Publication Society, 11 E. 36th Street, New York 16.

Book Find Club, 215 Fourth Avenue, New York 3.

Book of the Month Club, 345 Hudson Street, New York 14.

History Book Club, 45 W. 57th Street, New York 19.

Readers' Subscription, 35 W. 53rd Street, New York 19.

Seven Arts Book Society, 215 Fourth Avenue, New York 3.

II. ART

Art Treasures of the World, 100 Sixth Avenue, New York 13.

Associated American Artists Galleries, 711 Fifth Avenue, New York 22.

Contemporary Arts, 31-S Stanhope Street, Boston 16, Mass.

"Design Portfolio," Art News, 654 Madison Avenue, New York 21.

Marboro Book Shops, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York 3.

Metropolitan Miniatures, 345 Hudson Street, New York 14.

Museum Pieces, 114 E. 32nd Street, New York 16.

Sculpture Reproductions, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue at 82nd, New York 28.

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota. *Design Quarterly*.

III. MUSIC

Schwann LP Catalog, 131 Clarendon Street, Boston, 16, Mass.

Aaron Copland, What to Listen For in Music (Mentor, \$.35).

Howard Taubman, How to Build a Record Library (Hanover House, \$1.50).

Record Clubs.

American Recording Society, 100 Sixth Avenue, New York 13.

Music Appreciation Records, 345 Hudson Street, New York 14.

Musical Masterpiece Society, 250 W. 57th Street, New York 19.

Music Treasures of the World, 100 Sixth Avenue, New York 13.

Round Table

Advice to a Young Teacher Starting Out

We present here the friendly counsel of four long-time members of the profession. H. L. Creek for more than twenty-five years was head of the department of English, Purdue University; Oscar J. Campbell, head of the department of English, Columbia University; Amos L. Herold, head of the department of English, University of Tulsa and Arkansas College; Professor John Ball teaches at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

**1. H. L. Creek, professor emeritus,
Purdue University**

What can an older person like myself, who has experienced the ups and downs of college teaching during forty years, tell the young person who wants to teach English in a college? Not much, but perhaps something. Here are a few suggestions:

(1) The teacher who chooses English probably is eccentric, but he should not exaggerate his eccentricities. These eccentricities may amuse and even attract students, but they may also ruin a talk to colleagues in a staff meeting. When I was beginning, a friend told me that a college teacher could not afford to be eccentric until he was a full professor.

(2) He should like composition teaching and believe that it can be creative and inspiring. It is the composition teacher who is best remembered by former students.

(3) He should associate closely with at least one able and experienced teacher of his department whom he likes and who will talk over teaching problems with him. This is more important than discussions with the head of the department or the chairman of the freshman composition course. He may learn how to correct themes and how to handle indifferent students in conferences, and may even be told to enunciate more distinctly and

to see that his classroom is well ventilated.

(4) It is important that he be genuinely interested in the affairs of his department and of his college. He should express his opinions modestly when opportunity arises, and should attend staff and faculty meetings even though they are sometimes dreary. He should know the policies and the philosophy of his institution whether he approves them or not.

(5) Likewise he should be interested in his community. This is especially important if he is from another section of the country or from another kind of academic society so that at first he seems an alien in the group. Chatting with clerks in the local book store or with members of strange departments like entomology or applied mechanics will help. A colleague of mine once said he had no interest in the politics of the small town where he lived. It was a wrong attitude.

(6) He should be patient. If his merits are not recognized or do not seem to be recognized quickly enough, he should not be discouraged. And it is well to remember that small jobs well done may become important opportunities.

(7) He should be ready to go to another institution if a good opening occurs. Often a change brings just the stimulation one needs. Or an offer from another college may give him the assurance that he is needed and wanted where he is.

(8) He should do some writing for publication, not merely or chiefly for advancement, but for the lessons he will learn. I asked a professor of philosophy once what stimulated his thinking. His answer was: "A fountain pen in my hand." Most teachers need that kind of stimulation.

(9) From the beginning, he should think of himself as a member of a professional group. That means reading educational and scholarly publications, including *College English*, and attending professional meetings. Talks with representatives of book companies who come to his campus may give him useful hints about other institutions and their ways of doing things.

(10) Perhaps not less important than the suggestions already made is the advice that he think about certain warnings before he commits himself to teaching English. Recently I asked an old friend who years ago had given up a promising career in college English teaching what advice he would give one beginning to teach English. His answer was simple: "Don't." Almost as discouraging, for some at least, is the advice another person I know sometimes gives the young teacher: "Get into the administration building if you want to succeed. The average teacher cannot compete with the bright, ambitious young men who gather like bees around the executives in control of the money." And still another suggestion one hears is this: "There are better opportunities in other fields not too remote from English—perhaps education or psychology. Try one of them." There are good reasons for all these bits of advice. My friend who had given up teaching said that it is outrageous to ask the young person trained in literature for several years to give most of his time to teaching composition that the student should have learned by the end of his sophomore year in high school. Besides, advancement in English teaching in college is slow, and the system of limited

term appointments in vogue in important institutions may keep the teacher shifting from job to job for some of his best years. If he is fortunate enough to escape that ordeal, he nevertheless will probably do little teaching in the fields for which he has been specifically trained.

(11) But if he is the persistent idealist who disregards these warnings, let him remember that his greatest obligation as a college teacher is always teaching itself, which means helping students to deeper experiences in literature and perhaps the other arts as well as in life. Some persons have become teachers of English because they like to read, like to talk with educated people interested in books and pictures and music, like to browse in libraries or to travel abroad, and hope to have leisure and inspiration to write. That is not enough. They should also care for students, the innocent freshman as well as the enthusiastic English major. If they have a deep love for the subject they teach and also like people, many kinds of people, they may be the teachers whom alumni remember.

2. Oscar James Campbell, professor emeritus, Columbia University

The first piece of advice which this He-ancient would give to Teachers of English is this: "Never for a moment forget the crucial importance of your service to our American educational system from the first grade through the Graduate School." Remember that your first duty is to teach your students how to read and to write. In succeeding in this enterprise you are laying the foundations of their sound thinking and controlled feeling. No one can write any better than he can think. Words form the incarnation, not the mere dress of thought.

Therefore, begin your instruction in writing or speaking by stimulating your pupils to examine and to organize their own experience and to think about problems they meet in their daily living. In this way you build a bridge between

school and the world outside the classroom. This once successfully accomplished, the student will be willing and often eager to share his ideas with his fellow students and with you. In the process he will be doing his part in building another bridge—this one between youth and maturity—an achievement of first social and intellectual importance.

Your second essential task is to teach your pupils how to read and how to listen. In doing this you are opening the door through which new ideas and feelings enter their minds. A man who has not learned to read and to listen accurately and critically is a danger to our democratic way of life. He is an easy mark for the propaganda of stereotypes of demagogues, both of the right and of the left.

Realize also that you are the custodian of the one humane discipline that still occupies a central place in almost all school and college curricula. Remember that the humanities have always held this preferred spot in education from the Renaissance to the present day because they are supposed to teach a man how to develop all the resources of a civilized human being and so how to live a full and happy life. Therefore, you must not shirk your responsibility to find social, ethical and religious imperatives in the literature you study with your classes.

Don't be afraid to discuss controversial issues. They are precisely those which most need ventilation in the atmosphere of a classroom. Of course avoid becoming the agent of any sort of propaganda. But don't let the know-nothings, at present vociferously determined to make independent thinking a crime, scare you into reducing your English classes into intellectual deserts or graveyards. Insist on your American birthright of freedom to think and to criticize. Good teachers are always determined persons.

Since your two most important duties are the teaching of reading and writing, don't be persuaded to neglect them by doing what some educationists would

have you do: that is to teach everything from good table manners to what to do when an atomic bomb is dropped. A student is most co-operative if he can be given in each recitation a sense of achievement. The knowledge that he has learned to write and to punctuate a complex sentence correctly will make him happy and eager to repeat the experience, whereas an harangue on the duties of school citizenship or on the proper way to look at television will leave his interest languid and his attention dispersed. Teach him to do something specific with his mind, to master an idea, to learn for keeps the meaning and spelling of a word or to read a poem aloud with proper effect and he will know the deep delight of learning. I recently heard a nine-year-old girl say to her mother, "The trouble with my teacher is that she doesn't know it's fun to do something hard."

Above all, be true to your personality. That is a teacher's richest asset. Don't be a slave to pedagogic clichés. Don't let your methods of teaching be so tightly bound by half-remembered educational doctrine as to lose all freedom of individual initiative. Don't let your God-given mother-wit wither from disuse.

3. Amos L. Herold, *professor emeritus*, *University of Tulsa and* *Arkansas College*

Since freshman English is almost universally required for college degrees and sophomore literature is usually required or recommended, a young teacher of college English will almost certainly be assigned classes in composition and literature. My reflections will come under these two headings.

The chief objectives of freshman English are:

- a. To explain the college and professional uses of English.
- b. To enable all freshmen, by appropriate learning activities, to gain skillful use of the English language for

hearing, reading, speaking, and writing.

- c. And to teach them how to solve their own future English problems.

Most rhetorics pay little attention to the first point, which is well presented in Warfel-Mathews-Bushman's *American College English*. The second is a comprehensive order that challenges all of us throughout life. The third objective calls for self-help, self-reliance, and self-criticism with revision.

(1) Teach your students to improve their thinking, to be more logical, to fit words to their ideas. Last year one of my sophomores, the despair of her freshman instructor, wrote some sentences amusingly illogical. I advised her to be more deliberate and to avoid involved constructions. She persevered, she improved, and she won a creditable grade by THINKING!

(2) Teach them to observe sharply what they read and hear as the best way to improve their English. Point out that handbooks and rhetorics simply try to record the practices of the best speakers and writers. Encourage them to read choice prose passages slowly, and to re-read them silently and aloud. Train their ears to catch the tune of good sentences in the standard authors and to imitate or follow them as a poet keeps the tune of his meter or rhythm in composing verse.

(3) For oral and written theme material, induce your students to explore and use their own living and reading experiences. My GI youths have done excellent work telling of their war-time adventures. Once a woman student declared to me that she knew nothing worthwhile to write about, because she had worked in a collection agency. I coaxed her into explaining its operation, and she wrote a good theme, to be followed by a character sketch of the manager, and a story of a widow's financial trials and adventures.

(4) Be careful not to assign more work than the class can reasonably do in

the allotted time, for an overload may produce stalled and discouraged students. So far as practicable, induce them to read to the class their own themes if good, because they will then take more care and pride in writing them.

A young instructor should be qualified to teach introductory courses in American and British Literature. In larger institutions both courses may be or should be available sophomore options. If your knowledge of our own literature is scanty, frequent the mourner's bench of unpardonable ignorance till your sin is purged away!

Seek to induce your students to love good literature. Let them memorize and recite bits that they like, or read them to their classmates. Acquaint them with Smith's *What Can Literature Do for Me?* and teach the literary types incidentally and the elements of versification, but remember that one may enjoy both poetry and music without a technical knowledge of either though that is desirable.

Finally, in your literature courses be sure to teach composition and speech as well as the masterpieces. Insist that students improve steadily in their ability to read, speak, and write. If they are good, make them better, ever aiming at the best.

4. John Ball, *associate professor,* *Miami University*

(1) Teach your students living language, the language that you yourself use. As they listen to you speak and read what you write they will imitate your language. Your language is good language, expressive language—the best of models. Just as we learn to use language in the first place by imitation, so we learn to use language well by further imitation. Give your students plenty of opportunity to listen, to read, to talk, and to write.

(2) To increase their exposure to good language, encourage your students to read living language in books, and to talk and write in their own way about what they

read instead of repeating some ancient book-report formulas. Pick books that are full of life and live language, from Defoe's *Captain Singleton* to Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki*—travel, science, biography, history, as well as fiction. Make them want to do both reading and writing.

(3) Develop the concept of language change as the basic rule of the language. Language must change. Generally in the past the language has changed gradually. We are now in a period of rapid language change. The change is obvious in the status of *shall* and *will*, the subjunctive, several of the strong verbs, and a great many idioms. In fact, of the 30 or 40 questions that students most commonly ask about English usage nearly all are about expressions or forms in process of change.

It is not breaking faith with high standards to go along with language change; in fact, no real linguist would do anything else. If the grammar book says one thing and "everybody" says something else—and you catch yourself on the side of "everybody" sometimes—language change has progressed far enough to be recognized and discussed in class. If Winston Churchill's new book and *Harper's* and the *New York Times Magazine* are on "everybody's" side too, language change has occurred. There is no good and much harm in holding a grudge against *cannot help but* (for example) because your teacher held such a grudge; *cannot help but* is part of standard English now as a result of language change. So are *Due to* at the beginning of a sentence and many more once-maligned expressions.

(4) Ask yourself what use your students will make of language, and point them towards it. In most real-life language situations, where language has a job to do, carelessness will not be tolerated; your students should therefore get plenty of practice in careful writing. A little instruction in proofreading (not in proofreaders' marks but in finding mis-

spellings and other careless errors) would probably be helpful.

Language that has a job to do is the kind of language (as contrasted to the language of literary scholarship or of poetry) that 98% of your students need to learn to use. This kind of language describes, explains, narrates, sometimes sells or persuades. The best preparation for using language that has a job to do is practice in describing, explaining, or narrating.

A basic goal of practice and study in the use of language is the building of skill in organizing ideas. Sentences and paragraphs grow like brick walls, and all bricklayers need a period of apprenticeship. Again, it is not terminology that is needed; examples are easier to learn from than technical names for types of paragraph development. A good exercise to use is the one which begins with a black-board listing of the separate ideas in a sentence:

The students walked.
They walked in groups of two.
They walked in the groves.
The groves were on the hill.
The groves were in the shadow.
The shadow was cast by the round tower.
Other groups of students sat.
They sat in the cafes.
The cafes were down by the river.
The river's name is the River Fyrisa.
The students were talking.
They were drinking coffee.

The students discuss ways to make the ideas into a sentence again (What, all one sentence?). Such an exercise shows that there are many good ways to make a sentence; it also shows that there are many ways *not* to make a sentence, a lesson underlined by class disapproval of some of the weak efforts. Some student answers will be as acceptable as the original: "On the hill in the shadow of the round tower pairs of students walked in the groves, and down by the River Fyrisa groups of students sat in the cafes talking over their coffee" (Walter Havighurst).

There should be a balance in the exercises; they should not all be literary. Some should come from *Time* or some other source of language which has a job to do.

(5) Be very careful of the blue pencil on optional usages. It is easier to teach just one of two ways when actually either way is right—but if another teacher teaches the other right way and marks off for the one you prefer, the student has had it. Why should he bother studying English if even the teachers can't agree? The comma before the *and* in a series is optional; *judgement* is in the dictionary; *day-ta* and *dah-ta* are right as rain, both of them.

Be even more careful of using the blue pencil for pedagogic reasons when there is actually no error—beginning a sentence with *And* is a bad habit if overdone, but the way to prevent its being overdone is not to forbid it. The language recognizes no law against beginning sentences with conjunctions, ending them with prepositions, or, for that matter, splitting infinitives.

Many teachers have a comma rule "When in doubt, leave it out." I'd like to see that rule followed with blue-pencil corrections. We teachers make far too many marks on student papers; it becomes a habit to mark just everything.

If entering college freshmen had no more confidence in their walking than they have in their writing after their teachers get through with them, we'd have to go to them; they couldn't come to us. To walk or to write requires some degree of confidence, and confidence has to be built gradually through encouragement and successful experience. It helps a student writer to find some encouragement on even his worst paper.

(6) I've been saving grammar rules and exercises because I dread taking them up. I have been suggesting so far that the teaching of English should be oriented to the living, changing language, to the use the student will put it to, and to the student's needs as a person gaining

confidence in his use of language to communicate. Grammar as we know it is alien to this orientation.

I don't have anything against grammar; grammar is a description of the language, and there is nothing wrong with describing the language. I have a lot against grammars, however—specific grammars, the ones now available for freshman use. It is true that the ones we have agree with current standard usage at least nine times out of ten, and that they generally agree with each other on usage if not on nomenclature. However, until a true description of the language oriented to the fact of language change and to the developing science of structural linguistics is available I will continue my stand against grammars.

If we had a functional grammar I'm not sure I'd recommend it for use on any elementary level. We can learn how to mix mortar without knowing the scientific names and chemical formulas of the ingredients; we can watch someone mix mortar and by imitation make fine mortar of our own. We can learn how to talk without knowing what morphemes and phonemes are (fortunately). In the same way we can learn how to make an English sentence by imitation without knowing the classification of its parts. There seems to be something about humans that makes them want to classify everything—but that's no sign we should make classification the core of the learning process. A sentence is a living, dynamic structure of symbols carrying meaning. Making a sentence is a creative process—it is sowing seeds of meaning which can grow and take shape in the mind of the reader. Using grammar is cutting up a dead body. Doing a set of exercises is cutting up a whole morgue full of dead bodies. "Here is the right arm. Here is the heart. When the heart was alive it pumped blood to the right arm. Now that we know what to call these things and how to classify their functions we can use our own hearts and right arms much more effectively."

You have gathered by now that I consider analysis, or taking language apart and describing it, unsatisfactory in teaching the effective use of language in writing and speaking. I prefer synthesis, or putting language together, learned through imitation and practice—imitation of the living language of you, the teacher; of good books and good magazines; and of any man or medium using language well. A grammar, like a dictionary, makes a handy reference tool and a text for linguistic scholars—but who would start a freshman class wading through the dictionary eight pages at a time?

Put the problem another way. Your students already have a grammar of sorts, a visualized description of the language that permits them to use it—it is the sum

total of their language habits. With correction here and there through suggestion and imitation it can be built on, improved. I am not against that "understood" grammar, and its development; on the contrary. Neither am I against walking—but I am against any attempt to teach us all walking all over again from the beginning, using dozens of technical names for bones and muscles, and penalizing us for each experimental wrong step.

Finally, I should rather have you dismiss everything I have said as notional, than have you feel that the teaching of English is not worthwhile. It is often frustrating and sometimes confusing, but it offers a challenge and an opportunity that overshadow all differences of opinion about method and approach.

nigel molesworth on english masters

English masters hav long hair red ties and weeds like wordsworth throw them into extatsies.

They teach english e.g.migod you didn't ort to write a sentence like that molesworth. For prep they always set an essay if they can think of one. In the good old days it was always something like:

What I did in the hols.

A country ramble.

A day at a railway station.

Now english masters are ADVANCED chiz and kno all about t.s.eliot cristofer fry auden etc. etc and they read them so beautifully they make fotherington-tomas blub he is a sissy and not worth a d. For essays english masters give us weedy things like—

A trip in a space ship.

my favourite machine gun.

what to do with masters.

you see wotti mean in the old days you knew where you were but now they are trying to read your inmost thorts heaven help them. Anyway you hav to write them so as ushual boys are ground benethe palsied heel of mummers (auden.)

From DOWN WITH SKOOL by Geoffrey Willans and Ronald Searle (Copyright, 1954, by Vanguard Press, Inc.).

Letters to the Editor

Negro Fiction

To the Editors of "College English":

Thomas D. Jarrett, in his interesting article, "Recent Fiction by Negroes," in your November issue, makes little distinction between Negro novelists and "other recent fictionists" (p. 89). This casual combination of white and Negro novelists for purposes of discussion seems to point out an interesting trend in current fiction. Much confusion about Negro authors seems to exist today. For a long time I believed Bucklin Moon (*Without Magnolias*, 1949) to be a Negro novelist. Two of my students, after reading *Strange Fruit*, professed amazement when told that author Lillian Smith is not a Negro. Mr. Jarrett's article confirms my opinion that today a "Negro novel" i.e., a realistic, sensitive treatment of Negro characters) is not necessarily written by a Negro. We are now reaching in American literature the place attained long ago in the literature of such countries as Brazil (where integration of the races has not been delayed). The rich field of Negro life and folklore is not restricted to the use of colored writers only. It is becoming more and more impossible to judge the color of the author by the subject matter of his book or by his approach to it.

This new approach to subject matter is a two-way street. If I mention the names of Frank Yerby and Willard Motley to a student who professes to know no Negro novelists, the inevitable answer is "Oh, is *he* a Negro?" It is true that one

could easily read all of Motley's and Yerby's books without guessing that the author is colored. One might do the same with Ann Petry's *Country Place* (1947) and *The Narrows* (1953), Zora Neale Hurston's *Seraph on the Suwanee* (1948), William Gardner Smith's *Anger at Innocence* (1950), and Richard Wright's *Savage Holiday* (1954). These and other novelists continue a trend started by Paul Lawrence Dunbar, who is reported to have said as early as 1900, "We must write like the white man. . . . Our life is now the same." Dunbar made three rather unsuccessful attempts to write novels of white life, but an adequate "white" novel by a Negro did appear in 1939—William Attaway's *Let Me Breathe Thunder*. The preface calls it "a rare thing, a novel by a Negro about whites." Such a novel has become less rare every year since.

Judging by the sale of pocket books and other best sellers today, the majority of readers accept a Negro author on the same basis that they accept a white author. They no longer know or care about the color of a writer's skin. If a "Negro" novel is not necessarily written by a Negro, and if a "white" novel is not necessarily written by a white man, then the present state of affairs seems to justify the belief mentioned by Mr. Jarrett that the Negro writer has entered the mainstream of American fiction.

JAMES W. BYRD

East Texas State Teachers College

Some assumptions . . . to be examined

To the Editors of "College English":

The rapid changes in the teaching of communication skills have too often been predicated on carelessly examined assumptions about the nature and function of language, and on a superficial examination

of the theory and supporting data of the disciplines which have been so casually invoked. Rarely have we gone to the disciplines themselves; rather we have tried to pick their fruit without the husbandry.

One commonplace is that the communi-

cation skills belong to the social sciences; more explicitly, that communication is social behavior, to be examined in behavioral terms. By such statement we pretend to a scientific discipline. No longer are we the step-children of a literary family waiting for the public rites which will initiate us into the fellowship of belles-lettres.

Or, again, we identify ourselves with the "linguists," hoping to share their prestige without their labor. We would walk with social-psychologists without knowing George Herbert Mead, join with the anthropological linguists without reading Edward Sapir, or talk about the structure of language after a superficial examination of Bloomfield or Fries; some of us act as if Dale Carnegie were a psychologist.

It is no wonder that the established disciplines are skeptical about us, or that some of our literary fellows warn (for one example) against the "encroachment of the social sciences." The encroachment is ours, *on* the pseudo, not *of* the real. Our entry into other fields has been through the side door of semantics, educational philosophy or "popular" works; entering, we have grabbed a handful of assumptions and have based a whole "philosophy" of communication on them, without examination, without even understanding the techniques of examination.

It is instructive that these generalizations need not hold, that here and there a teacher, a graduate course or a research study begins where the scientist begins, at the beginning, with an examination of assumptions . . . hypothesis-observation-testing, but the modal approach is that which we have seen in the post-war introduction of "listening" training. Here we have a handful of good studies, properly limited in scope, several survey-type studies of doubtful validity, and a lot of speculation based on a few general assumptions borrowed from other disciplines. The easiest hypothesis to test about listening training is that there is no evidence

about its validity, a null hypothesis, yet such programs operate *as if* they were valid.

It is not my purpose to attack the use of other disciplines in the teaching of the communication skills . . . indeed my bias would encourage their continued and extended use. My thesis is that we cannot use what we do not understand; we cannot apply with safety that which we cannot clearly state and test. If we are to teach skills, we must study more thoroughly what is known about them.

Often we do not even have sufficient knowledge to form an hypothesis which could be tested; as often we do not even realize that we are operating on the basis of assumptions nor, if we do, can we state these assumptions exactly. Until we do, we cannot form reasonable hypotheses, nor begin the rigorous observation which is the basis of all discipline.

I would like to state some assumptions, drawn from a variety of fields, about the nature and function of language, assumptions which I think are defensible on the evidence but all of which need further study.

1. Language is behavior and must be taught on behavioral principles.

2. Language is first of all a functioning tool of interaction and only relatively rarely a means of reflective thought; as such it has no meaning apart from the total context of situation; meaning is context.

3. Language operates within a cultural context and is limited by it.

4. Language is not only dependent on its culture, but in turn structures reality for this culture. The individual cannot operate outside the limits set by his language, nor see the world except as it is given structure by his language. This structure will vary from culture to culture.

5. As behavior, language is measured by effectiveness in terms of purpose; it must adapt to the situation, the user, the audience, the subject matter.

6. As behavior it must be studied in terms of group norms, the expectations of the group as to usage, content and purpose. These expectations must be found by ob-

servation, they cannot be prescribed on the authority of historical or theoretical considerations.

7. Language cannot be taught prescriptively, since the prescription may fail to keep up with the actual practice of the culture; rather, the student must be taught to observe usage and to fit his communication to accepted good usage.

8. The unit of language is not the part—the word, sentence or paragraph—but is the total perception to be transmitted, to which the parts are bound. Thus, the approach to teaching communication skills is the teaching of a total perception.

9. The end of language is not language but content and intent, leading to better perception by the audience. The teaching of skills, then, will be concerned first with what is said, in its context; how it is said will develop from this.

10. Language as social behavior has social responsibility, including proper recognition of bias, accurate use of data, and a positive acceptance of the opinion of others and of the relativity of knowledge.¹

These are a few of the assumptions about language and the process of communication which many of us make, with or without consciously phrasing them. None of these has been sufficiently examined by teachers of skills, although a substantial body of data in other disciplines supports them. Some are oversimplifications, *all are to be doubted*.

And yet these assumptions and many related to them indicate the direction in which our thinking about the teaching of skills must go. They are not the final formulations of a discipline but must be reexamined, restated, framed into hypotheses, observed, tested, rehypothesized. . . . Only then may we sit in the circle of language scientists and from them learn, because we will know what they are talking about.

HERBERT HACKETT

University of Utah

¹ Some of the wording and emphasis of the above assumptions is borrowed from Frederic Reeve, "Toward a Philosophy of Communication," *Education* 72: 445-455 (March 1952).

Dear Coach Musselman:

Remembering our discussions of your football men who were having troubles in English, I have decided to ask you, in turn, for help.

We feel that Paul Spindles, one of our most promising scholars, has a chance for a Rhodes Scholarship, which would be a great thing for him and for our college. Paul has the academic record for this award, but we find that the aspirant is also required to have other excellences, and ideally should have a good record in athletics. Paul is weak. He tries hard, but he has troubles in athletics. But he does try hard.

We propose that you give some special consideration to Paul as a varsity player, putting him if possible in the backfield of the football team. In this way, we can show a better college record to the committee deciding on the Rhodes Scholarships. We realize that Paul will be a problem on the field, but—as you have often said—cooperation between our department and yours is highly desirable, and we do expect Paul to try hard, of course. During intervals of study we shall coach him as much as we can. His work in the English Club and on the debate team will force him to miss many practices, but we intend to see that he carries an old football around to bounce (or whatever one does with a football) during intervals in his work. We expect Paul to show entire goodwill in his work for you, and though he will not be able to begin football practice till late in the season he will finish the season with good attendance.

Sincerely yours,

Benjamin Plotinus

Chairman, English Department

(Contributed by William Stafford, Lewis and Clark College)

Current English

CONDUCTED BY THE NCTE COMMITTEE ON CURRENT ENGLISH USAGE¹

Q. I heard a principal of a high school say, "This program is not liable to work out as well as we think." Is this the proper use of *liable*? G.A.P.

A. In formal writing *liable* normally implies danger or the indication of something undesirable happening, as: "He is liable to be killed if he attempts to fly that plane without checking it." In the twentieth century, however, there is a great tendency to employ it when referring to something that is probable without any reference to its outcome or desirability. One can find instances of the substitution of *liable* for *likely* in the great metropolitan newspapers, such as the *New York Times*. For instance, on April 4, 1954, Dorothy Barclay wrote in her article, "Creative Work Can Unite the Family": "When two youngsters are working together, 'that ol' debbil sibling rivalry' is all too liable to show his influence." In the speech of persons from all walks of life the substitution is common. One may hear from a doctor "This sickness is not liable to be serious"; or from a dentist, "Extracting the tooth is not liable to hurt"; or from a teacher, "I'm not liable to go to the meeting tomorrow"; or from

a taxicab driver, "It's liable to rain today." The interchange of the two words is also frequently heard on the television shows, which reach millions at one time: "The dance is liable to be a big hit" (Red Buttons Show—May 3, 1954); "He's liable to leave before we get there" (Kraft Music Hall—May 5, 1954); "The dog is liable to win the prize" (Jackie Gleason Show—May 29, 1954). Since *liable* is so often employed in the place of *likely* by both the cultured and the uncultured, it may soon pass from the colloquial, informal stage to formal written English. M.M.B.

Q. Has *Claim* now become a synonym for *assert*, *state*, *maintain*? P.H.M.

A. According to H. W. Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, *claim* has made its way through advertisements into journalism and into speech and literature. There are ample illustrations of this usage in reputable modern writings and this meaning is now standard English. One may cite "I find that a great impression can be made nowadays by claiming never to have heard of somebody." (James Hilton, *Time and Time Again*, 1953, p. 134) and "I wouldn't sell him a candy bar on credit. He'd claim it wasn't sweet." (John Steinbeck, *The Wayward Bus*, 1947, p. 185). Other citations may be found in the supplement to the *Oxford Dictionary*. M.M.B.

¹ Margaret M. Bryant, *chairman*, Harold B. Allen, Adeline C. Bartlett, Archibald A. Hill, Kemp Malone, James B. McMillan, Albert H. Marckwardt, Russell Thomas, John N. Winburne, Brice Harris, *ex officio*.

News and Ideas

IN "THE TEMPEST AND THE ANCIENT Comic Tradition" (winter *Virginia Quarterly Review*) Bernard Knox, who teaches the classics at Yale, contributes a fascinating article on how Shakespeare adapted the patterns of classical comedy for use as the basic structure of *The Tempest*. The paradigm of ancient comedy, Knox reminds us, sprang from a society in which there was a strict dividing line between free people and slaves. Thus Plautine comedy proceeds on two levels which often interpenetrate. A typical classical pattern is the plot in which a clever slave by intelligent initiative and intrigue solves his master's problems and as a reward gains his liberty. Despite its extraordinary setting, this is the pattern of *The Tempest*, and except for *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Tempest* is the most rigidly traditional of all of Shakespeare's plays. Prospero is the master, the free man. Ariel's is the traditional role of the intelligent slave. He acts as Prospero's eyes and ears and at the end achieves his freedom. Caliban is the surly, cursing slave of the old tradition, and Stephano also is a standard character of the old comedy, the slave in charge of his master's wine who drinks most of it himself. Knox's analysis is rich in detailed comparisons as he points out how the initial situation of the play, the nature of the relationships of most of the characters, the development of the action, and the final solution are "all conjugations of the basic paradigm of classical comedy." However, he is also very careful to make clear that the paradigm is "only the bare foundation of a poetic structure which in feeling and imagination far surpasses Plautine comedy."

A FRESH READING OF *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*, entitled "The Pride of Lemuel Gulliver," is provided by Samuel H.

Monk in the winter *Sewanee Review*. Gulliver is *not* Swift, says Monk. "He is a fully rendered objective dramatic character no more to be identified with Swift than Shylock with Shakespeare." Swift was much stronger and healthier than Gulliver. He hated the stupidity and folly of mankind, but he did not abandon his fellowman as hopeless. However, he was too honest and too much of a realist to be able to accept the optimistic view of human nature that the philosophers of the Enlightenment proposed, and Gulliver is Swift's answer to these optimists. The surface of the book, Monk continues, is comic, a satire of the four aspects of man, and a brilliant parody of travel literature, at once science fiction and a witty parody of science fiction. But "at its center is tragedy, transformed through style and tone into icy irony." Swift's savageness arises from his anger "at the difference between what men are and what they might be if they only would rise to the full height of their humanity." He thinks it is fallacious and stupid to attribute to our race qualities it can never possess. To do so is pride, the besetting sin of men and angels. This theme of pride, as Monk points out, looms large in *Gulliver's Travels*, and Gulliver, himself, is the supreme instance of a creature smitten with pride. The danger in his travels was that he would discover something he was not strong enough to face. This happened. It destroyed his humanity, and he took refuge in a sick and morbid pride.

WILLA CATHER IS PROMINENT in the January *American Literature* where Lillian and Edward Bloom discuss "The Genesis of *Death Comes to the Archbishop*" and Curtis Bradford analyzes her uncollected short stories.

The Blooms give a substantial sampling of the sources which helped to bring the novel into being but emphasize that *Death Comes to the Archbishop* represents an intensely personal experience in conception and growth. Miss Cather had developed an affection for the Southwest long before her first visit in 1912, had long before become intrigued by the Kat-zimo legend. Then between 1912 and 1925 she spent long periods of time in New Mexico "absorbing" her material, but it was not until 1925 that the technical conception of the novel came to her. When the idea that had teased her for many years finally took shape, the resulting novel combined literary borrowings and personal experience.

Bradford reports that between 1896 and 1930 Miss Cather published some twenty-five stories in magazines of national circulation most of which were never included in the three collections of her shorter fiction made in her lifetime. They fall generally into three groups, stories of pioneers, of artists, and of Miss Cather's particular type of passionate women, which Bradford demonstrates by summarizing their plots. Miss Cather, he says, believed that every writer should have the right of supervision over his own published work, and she herself exercised this right extensively. Her reason, Bradford thinks, was that she wished to shape the canon of her work to leave the impression that she had always been an affirmer of America's pioneer past and a critic of the later America. These uncollected stories belie that generally accepted idea. They show that from 1892-1912 Miss Cather had little good to say of Nebraska and that during that period she explored nearly every mode of popular fiction. Thus only two stories from this period remain in the canon. Ironically enough, Bradford concludes, it was not until Miss Cather stopped trying to be a popular writer that she became one. He appends a checklist of these signed but uncollected stories.

IN LAST SUMMER'S ISSUE OF *The Colorado Quarterly* Bernard Bowron advanced the thesis that the reason the appeal of *The Grapes of Wrath* has outlasted its somewhat dated message of social revolt is that its real literary form is that of a "wagons west" romance. In his article Bowron draws attention to many adroit parallels to that genre, for example: the Joad's journey not only is the structural principle which holds the novel together, but also is composed of the two traditional major movements, the first a period of high excitement in which the going is pretty good, and a second, in which the going is terrible; the Joads' truck is a covered wagon (one end is tarpaulined over) and its infirmities provide an unfailing source of suspense (a burned bearing is substituted for a broken wagon wheel); the sallies of the state troopers parallel Indian skirmishes; Grandpa is buried in the regulation nameless grave; the Joads meet up with the Wilsons and form a wagon train which joins others and these meetings are celebrated with song and fellowship; the uprooted men shed the old society and create a new one; new leaders emerge. The main difference between the "wagons west" romances and the *Grapes of Wrath*, he says, is that in Steinbeck's novel California does not prove to be an Eden and things get worse instead of better. In the winter issue of the same magazine, Warren G. French takes warm exception to Bowron's thesis. He admits certain structural similarities to the "wagons west" genre but thinks *The Grapes of Wrath* satirizes rather than conforms to this pattern because it outrages all the psychological assumptions upon which such stories rely for their appeal. Such stories, says French, concern a dissatisfied and frustrated hero who is innately superior to a society which fails to recognize his merits. The reader can identify himself with him. To establish himself, the hero undergoes a series of trials, but once these are over and the promised land is reached, it ful-

fills his expectations and is either vacant or occupied by a weaker and easily conquered group. Moreover, these stories are set in a remote period and are fundamentally primitivistic and anti-intellectual. *The Grapes of Wrath* fails to satisfy this formula. Steinbeck's migrants are not escapists but refugees. Steinbeck was not concerned with idealizing the past but with symbolizing the present. It is French's belief that the whole psychological basis of the book is designed "to frustrate the anticipations of the reader geared to the smoothly executed clichés of western genre fiction" and "to explode rather than to perpetuate the myths and conventions upon which it is based." Both articles will be found provocative by persons teaching Steinbeck's novel.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOYCE Cary (*The Horse's Mouth*, *The Prisoner of Grace*, *Except the Lord*), seventh in a series of interviews on "The Art of Fiction," appears in the winter *Paris Review*. A novel "should be an experience and convey an emotional truth rather than arguments," Cary thinks. For him, "the principal fact of life is the free mind." The main concern of the novelist should be "what makes men tick." You've got to find out what people *believe*, what is pushing them on. And of course it's a matter too, of the simpler emotional drives. Like ambition and love. These are the real stuff of the novel, and you can't have any sort of real form unless you've got an ordered attitude toward them." Apropos of his own method of creating a novel, Cary said that he writes "the big scenes first, that is the scenes that carry the meaning of the book—the emotional experience. . . . When I have the big scenes sketched I have to devise a plot into which they'll fit. Of course often they don't quite fit. Sometimes I have to throw them out. But they have defined my meaning, given form to the book. Lastly I work over the whole surface." He also rewrites a great deal. "I work over the whole book and cut out

anything that does not belong to the emotional development—the texture of feeling."

TWO DIVERGENT VIEWS OF Henry James' *The Golden Bowl* appear in the winter *Sewanee Review*, both of which use the thesis of a third person as a springboard. Some time ago Quentin Anderson in an article in the *Sewanee* developed the idea that *The Ambassadors*, *The Wings of a Dove*, and *The Golden Bowl* constitute an elaborate allegory based on the elder James's version of Swedenborg's philosophy. In the current issue, Francis Fergusson investigates the nature of the allegorical method in *The Golden Bowl* and arrives at a different conclusion, namely, that James was attempting the imaginative feat of suggesting a meaning in western history and human life without benefit of any objective system of philosophy or religion. In an adjoining article, Caroline Gordon pouf pouf's any such idea. In *The Golden Bowl*, she says, James has put before us as much of Christian charity as he himself was able to divine. True he was ignorant of rite or dogma, but she thinks that through his genius he was able to apprehend the archetypal patterns of Christianity and to use them as no novelist before him had used them. But it took him a lifetime to do it. Miss Gordon's conclusion is that *The Golden Bowl* is the only one of his major creations that is a comedy in the sense that Dante's great poem is a comedy, "the only one in which virtue is wholly triumphant over vice."

THE DOMINANT FORMAL THEME in Dostoevski's works in his conception of Russian destiny, writes Irving Howe, in the winter *Kenyon Review*. In Dostoevski's ideal Russia, the bureaucrat of the Orthodox Church "was made to enclose the utopian dreams of his youth." This ideal, Howe continues, had about the same relation to the actual Russia as T. S. Eliot's idea of a Christian society has to

existing Christian states. From any coherent point of view, Howe says, Dostoevski's politics are a web of confusion, yet he is unequalled in modern literature for showing the muddle that may lie beneath the order and precision of ideology. No other novelist has dramatized so powerfully the values and dangers, the uses and corruptions of systematic thought by ideologies. Howe analyzes *The Possessed* and other of the novels to this point. A long, detailed article worth reading in its entirety.

THOMAS HARDY'S "TRAGIC Hero" is discussed by Ted R. Spivey in the December *Nineteenth Century Fiction*. Spivey takes issue with those who think that Hardy is indifferent to the major concerns of form. In his opinion Hardy's unique genius "lies in his exquisite interweaving of metaphorical equivalents of a dominating theme." He goes on to analyze *The Return of the Native*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and other novels to show that Hardy uses metaphors functionally and not haphazardly and for the purpose of shifting the novels' perspectives from large to small, from past to present, etc. The end result, according to Spivey, is that the plots are universalized by the use of metaphor.

IS THE TENDENCY OF SCOTT Fitzgerald's art essentially tragic or pessimistic? That is the question explored by John W. Bicknell in "The Wasteland of F. Scott Fitzgerald" (*Virginia Quarterly Review*). Bicknell's main theme is that in praising Fitzgerald "we should realize that we are praising a writer whose essential vision of American life is, to use an old word, defeatist." *The Great Gatsby*, he points out, begins and ends in pessimism; Gatsby's death is pathetic rather than tragic; he is a victim, not a hero. *Tender Is the Night* is even more pessimistic than *Gatsby*, and as in that novel the final image is one of defeat. Nor do *The Crack Up* or *The Last Tycoon* evidence less frustration.

Fitzgerald's failure to give his themes nobility, Bicknell thinks, "lies in his inability to image forth the necessity of struggle." "We do not need paragons to have tragic heroes; what we do need is a man, who though no paragon, nevertheless conducts a struggle against the forces, both external and internal, which are destroying him." Fitzgerald's heroes do not struggle, for Fitzgerald's world is in full Spenglerian decline.

"YOUTH AND THE FINE ARTS" BY Norman Cousins appears as the lead article in the *Junior College Journal* (January). What Cousins says seems so important that, with the gracious permission of Editor James W. Reynolds, we quote a part of it:

"... there is great need in America today for new writers. I am not thinking here of a technical shortage of supply, for production is still several light years ahead of consumption. The need for new writers I am thinking of has to do with the type of book and voice America is hungering for today. That type of book will not be afraid to deal with great themes and great ideas. It will not be afraid to concern itself with the larger visions of which man in general and America in particular are capable, for America today is living far under its moral capacity as a nation. It will not be afraid to break away from the so-called hard-boiled school of writing which has made a counterfeit of realism precisely because it ignores the more meaningful aspects of life.

"This need of which I speak has come about because too many writers have been writing out of their egos instead of their consciences; because too many of them have been pre-occupied with human neuroses to the virtual exclusion of human nobility; because too many of them, in the desire to avoid sentimentality, have divorced themselves from honest sentiment and honest emotion. Indeed, we have been passing through what later historians may regard as the Dry-Eyed Period of American Literature. Beneath the hard and shiny surface of the school of the super-sophisticated, there is no blood or bones, merely a slice of life

too thin to have meaning. Instead of reaching for the grand themes that can give literature the epic quality it deserves, too many writers have been trying to cut the novel down to the size of psychiatric case histories."

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS HAS issued a facsimile of the First Folio of Shakespeare, which seems likely to require a third printing. The only other reproduction of comparable authority was selling for about \$100; with the support of the Louis M. Rabinowitz Foundation, the Yale edition is priced at \$12.50.

In the November *Shakespeare Newsletter* Charlton Hinman describes the collation he is doing of the 79 copies of the First Folio in the Folger Library in Washington, D. C. With a machine of his invention (using mirrors) a page of two copies can be compared letter for letter in two minutes. Such comparison is needed because changes made while the printing was going on and before the binding seem to have left no two copies exactly alike.

The same issue of the *Newsletter* carries an editorial comment on "A Shakespeare Boom." Four of the summer festivals—Stratford, Canada; Antioch College; Ashland, Oregon, and San Diego—together had 200,000 admissions, and English Stratford alone had more than this number. Why? Schools and colleges have taught Shakespeare well enough to create a latent demand not only for the plays but for various productions of the plays.

POETRY PUBLIC, LETTER 6 HAS now achieved a sixteen-page printed format instead of the original mimeo. This unique magazine is devoted to exercises in taste, presenting compositions (usually poems) for the readers to judge and on later pages the opinions of its editor(s). The value of this depends of course upon the soundness of the editorial judgments. It also points out all the newly published poems elsewhere which seem excellent to its editors. The director manager is Lawrence R. Holmes, Nebraska State Teach-

ers College, Charon. Bimonthly, \$2.00 a year; single copies, \$0.50.

ONE OF THE QUESTIONS DISCUSSED at a group conference held as part of the NCTE College Section meeting at Detroit last November was: How can the teaching of nonmajors become a respected and rewarding profession? Thirty-nine members participated, and as part of the proceedings filled out questionnaires. Their answers have now been tabulated, and Chairman Carl Lefevre, Pace College, reports as follows:

"This questionnaire presented eight questions on various working conditions, values, and job satisfactions that may be associated with college English teaching. Respondents were asked to evaluate the items as follows:

- 0 of no importance
- 1 easily dispensable
- 2 of real importance
- 3 of first importance

Arithmetical means have been computed for all items, and these means are regarded as the combined ratings of the group as a whole. Of the eight items, six were rated between 2 and 3, that is, between "of real importance" and "of first importance"; no item was rated as low as "easily dispensable," and even the lowest rating (1.4) was well above "of no importance." The arithmetical means indicated parenthetically in the following paragraph may be compared directly with the numbers in the above rating scale.

"First and most important in degree of support accorded by the respondents was *Satisfaction in the subject*, defined as love of literature and good writing, plus knowledge that English is respected by oneself and others whose judgment is valued (2.7). In second place was a group of five values that received virtually identical ratings: *professional recognition*, not only the traditional and established kinds, but new forms stressing teaching and related work with students (2.3); *adequate compensation* (2.3); *identification with department and institution* (2.3); *participation in planning and administration of courses* (2.2); and *predictability*, assurance of tenure and understand-

ing of criteria for advancement (2.2). Of lesser importance but still of some importance were *a sense of accomplishment in teaching successful classes* (1.7), and *a course of one's own* and some privacy in a respectable office (1.4).

"Thus this group of college English teachers placed *satisfaction in the subject*, a highly professional consideration, far ahead of all other rewards of their work; but they also attached great importance to a number of related questions of good and welfare. Such a strong desire for the specified values and job satisfactions would seem to indicate a very high regard for the potentials of our profession."

APPLICATION OF MODERN LINGUISTICS to the teaching of speaking and writing is just beginning. Many who have attended NCTE conventions and/or have read C. C. Fries' *The Structure of English* have some notion of modern grammar which analyzes sentences by their form instead of by their meaning, seeking the signals that indicate the structure of the sentences. Some are also familiar with the advances made in the study of intonation, stress, and pauses as signals of meaning and even of sentence structure. In the December issue of *College Composition and Communication* (NCTE, \$0.75) Donald J. Lloyd's "Grammar in Freshman English" declares that the teacher of written composition must make students conscious of the meaning signals in speech, which they have used unconsciously since their nursery days, and then show them the written signals (as far as we have any) that stand for the speech signals. He thinks that by attempting this in one semester of freshman English he is causing much more than usual growth in the students' control of language, but does not attempt to describe specifically the signals and constructions taught. In the same magazine Sumner Ives' "Grammatical Assumptions" gives this excellent definition of grammar: "the study and description of the devices which convey structural meanings in a particular language." This

is clearly different from both usage, with which teachers often confuse it; and from rhetoric, for which it is a foundation.

TEACHERS OF ENGLISH WHO realize the need to teach listening but feel that they do not know how to set about it will welcome the "Listening Number" of *Education* (January, 1955) published at 349 Lincoln Street, Hingham, Massachusetts (\$0.50 per copy). In it Ralph G. Nichols' "Ten Components of Effective Listening" reveals some of the specifics to be taught. Arnold Needham's "Listening with a Purpose" describes his actual college-classroom procedure of developing better listeners. Donald E. Bird's "Bibliography of Selected Materials About Listening" has a preface stating briefly most of the principal ideas contained in his references. Sam Duker's "Additional Bibliography" includes practically everything not listed by Bird which has been published in this field. The magazine includes six other readable articles about listening.

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE IS celebrating its centennial. As part of the festivities, a symposium on general education will be held April 25-27. Authorities in many fields will participate, and the program will include "area interest groups" in the humanities and in communication skills. Among the speakers on communication skills will be John Gerber, State University of Iowa, NCTE president, Porter Perrin, University of Washington, Irvin J. Lee, Northwestern University, Albert H. Marckwardt, University of Michigan, J. Hooper Wise, University of Florida, Paul Diederich, Educational Testing Service, and Francis Shoemaker, Teachers College, Columbia University, all well known to NCTE members.

TO INCREASE THE PRESTIGE OF English among students, the English department of Louisiana State University

distributes a six-page folder. The cover page, printed in red and black, asserts ENGLISH SPELLS MANY THINGS and carries this acrostic for English: Education, (K)nowledge, Government, Law, Industry, Science, Humanities. The information within is presented by way of alternate statements concerning the purpose of courses in English and quotations from business men and specialists in other fields as to the value of the liberal arts. A copy was sent to *College English* by Thomas A. Kirby.

A FOUR-PAGE PAMPHLET WITH photographic illustrations describing the possibilities for students majoring in English is being distributed this year to its students by Purdue University. The information, prepared by the English department, is arranged under four sub-heads: English Provides Broad Education; English Prepares for Specific Careers; English Provides Background for Careers in Business and Industry; Programs of Study in English at Purdue.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY ON RHETORIC in American Colleges, 1850-1900, by Al-

bert R. Kitzhaber has been issued by the Bibliographical Center for Research of the Denver (Colorado) Public Library. In a brief introduction Kitzhaber points out that it was during this period that correctness in the mechanical details of writing began to be emphasized and established as a dominating idea.

THE CONFERENCE ON ORIENTAL-Western Literature and Cultural Relations of the Modern Language Association was held last summer at Indiana University. Summaries of papers and discussions appear in *Literature East and West*, the newsletter of the Conference. The newsletter "seeks to make accessible and to interpret scholarship in the field of Oriental Studies to teachers, students, and librarians" and to provide a medium by which the general student of literature can keep abreast of developments in that field. It will be found especially useful to teachers of World Literature. Subscription price, \$1.00 a year (four issues). Mimeographed. Address: *Literature East and West*, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland.

Symbolism and the Student—[Continued from page 434]

suggested how all literature uses things seen to call up things unseeable. The hunt for the huge primordial bear is not merely a metaphor in itself. It becomes the occasion for pointing out that all stories "have to talk about something," while they are concerned with something beyond. Truth is not confined to a youth and a girl he could never overtake, or to a boy and a bear he could never kill. But it can be glimpsed and grasped only in particu-

lar human instances like these.

The story writer embodies meaning in people (from whom all meaning must come), giving it the warmth, color, and urgency of human experience. He uses specific incidents to suggest universal conditions of life. That method of conveying truth can be considered indirect, or it can be considered the most concrete and direct method possible. At any rate, it is the story teller's way.

Councilletter

The Executive Committee of the Council held its regular mid-winter meeting in Denver, Colorado, January 27, 28, 29, with all nine members present. This inter-convention meeting is always a busy one—three days of concentrated thought and deliberation. At this meeting, plans for the November convention got their first hearing, and the progress of working committees was carefully reviewed.

This behind-the-scenes activity of the Council is the rich sub-soil in which the annual programs grow, and it never fails to impress those newly elected to membership on the committee. Through the reports of its liaison officers, who represent the close tie of each working group to the Council, the Executive Committee is able to coordinate effort, to take up slack, and to offer special encouragement where it is most needed. Newest among the committees just getting under way, as membership rosters are completed and approved, are the Committee on Appraisal of Evaluating Techniques, the Committee on International Cooperation, the Committee on Preparation and Certification of Teachers, the Committee on Distribution of Publications of Affiliates, the Committee on Elementary Schools Portfolio, the Committee on College and Adult Reading List, the Committee on Relations with Publishers of Paperbound Books, and the Committee on Recruitment of Teachers of English.

At its Denver meeting, the Executive Committee took steps to complete the work on committee structure already begun and reported to the Board of Directors in Detroit last November. With authorization from the Board to proceed, an amendment to the constitution will be submitted next November which will redefine relationships and smooth out operational procedures. A glance at the long list of committees, commissions and conferences carrying on the work of the Council, pub-

lished and distributed each year at the November convention, will indicate clearly the need for such coordination of effort.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the Denver meeting was the Report on the Status of the Profession, by President John Gerber. A whole half-day was spent in discussing a carefully prepared outline posing Basic Problems Facing the Profession. Not only better coordination of effort, as referred to in the preceding paragraphs, but long-range and total-view planning were the watch-words of the mid-winter meeting. Eight fields were listed in which the Council might well initiate study or recommend action to be taken. Out of the discussion came the realization that the Council faces new and important responsibilities. These will doubtless be enlarged upon in the next Councilletter by President Gerber himself and will, in part at least, find expression in the program now being planned for the convention next November in New York. Of specific interest at this time, however, might be the release of the first vice-president from other duties to explore the possibilities for long-range planning and to submit to the Executive Committee a plan for facing the more crucial issues that beset us: the building of a sound public opinion, for example, regarding the teaching of the language arts; or the clarification of teaching responsibilities in our field. We live in an age of increasing complexity, and the need for penetrating insight into the nature of our problems was never greater. Without such insight, energies are wasted and morale declines.

Long-range planning was evidenced in Denver, also by the advance choice of sites for the next four November conventions: New York in 1955; St. Louis in 1956; Denver in 1957, with the prospect of a brand new, ultra-modern hotel ready to house us; Minneapolis in 1958. With our calendar of convention sites thus

assured, local sponsoring groups may also swing into long-range planning and ease the problem of providing for our growing membership.

With that growing membership—boosted recently by the efforts of the Public Relations Committee, by the Junior Affiliates, and by the personal letter of the President urging each member to secure another member—comes the need for extending the activities of the Council, to satisfy a more varied interest. Already reported in the March Councilletter are the summer conferences sponsored by the Council either independently or jointly with educational institutions in various parts of the country. On the not-too-distant horizon lies the probability of a workshop in the Canadian Rockies at Banff, and the possibility of a special European tour sponsored by the Council. Investigation of both eventualities is now under way.

All in all, it was a very far-seeing meeting in Denver, with enthusiasm for the future running high and energies of the present carefully channeled for the realization of our aims.

LUELLA B. COOK
First Vice-President

You want *all* your *College English* issues delivered on time. So do the workers in the NCTE office. Your magazine can and will be on time—if you and the NCTE staff do a little team work.

It is at renewal time that trouble may occur. To handle all the necessary office routine of putting you back on the mailing list takes a good deal of time. Here are at least five operations involved: (1) The payment must be properly recorded and entered. (2) The record card we have for you must be marked to the new expiration date. (3) The addressing plate must be repunched to show the new expiration. (4) Any back issues to which you are entitled must be sent. (5) Membership cards must be dated and mailed.

If your renewal and a second expiration notice cross in the mails, or you change your address, there are *more* steps.

Unless all of the above steps can be completed before the tenth of the month preceding the month of publication, your copy cannot be included in the first mailing, because the envelopes for the issue must be run through the addressing machine on that day. Therefore, your copy will be *at least* a week late, regardless of the efforts of the staff to hurry it.

The time of the greatest delays is in September through October, because of the flood of new member applications, and the tendency of those whose memberships have expired in the spring to wait until September to renew. So much mail comes in during these months that it cannot all be opened daily, but has to be stacked up at the end of each day. Opening the mail is complicated; there are ten types of subscriptions, plus orders for publications and other materials.

All of the difficulty can be delayed by better timing on the part of Council members and subscribers. If a great portion of the 8,319 subscriptions and memberships which expire in May were renewed before summer vacation, they could all be processed and ready for the September mailing of the magazines. Summer is a fairly slack season in the NCTE office.

Those whose memberships and subscriptions expire in May will find a special renewal blank in the April issue. If they will use this blank to renew immediately, they will be doing themselves and the NCTE office staff a great favor.

The NCTE office staff is a hard-working, conscientious group. They do their best, working nights and Saturdays in addition to their forty-hour week, to try to get your magazines to you on time. If you will help by renewing now, they will appreciate it, and you will be assured of getting your *College English* during the first week in September. Will you help yourselves and the NCTE office, please?

New Books

Teaching Materials

LIVING MASTERPIECES OF AMERICAN LITERATURE. Edited by Randall Stewart and Dorothy Bethurum. Scott, Foresman. Pp. 1080. \$6.00.

An eclectic selection from the works of thirteen American writers, available in a one volume edition, and also in a four-book edition (each \$2.25). In the single volume each of the four "books" is paged separately. They are: *Concord Idealism* (Emerson, Thoreau); *Classic American Fiction* (Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, James); *Modern American Narration* (Twain, Hemingway, Faulkner); *American Poetry* (Poe, Emerson, Whitman, Dickinson, Frost, Eliot). The editors believe that "our literature ought to fortify our souls," and that, if our students are to believe this, the most effective way of introducing them to the idea is to present them with the best work by a limited number of writers and to have them read complete works, not excerpts. Among the complete works included are: *Walden*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Benito Cereno*, *The Spoils of Poynton*, and *Old Times on the Mississippi*. Planned primarily as an introduction to literature, not as a text for a survey course.

AMERICAN HERITAGE. An Anthology and Interpretative Survey of Our Literature. Edited by Leon Howard, Louis B. Wright, and Carl Bode. Heath. 2 Vols. Vol. I, pp. 789; Vol II, pp. 845. Each \$5.75. 10½" by 7". Double columned.

A wide-ranging anthology usable as a text in both American literature and American civilization courses. Its purpose is "to make the American heritage self-evident through a select body of literature." The massive bulk of selections representing more than 200 authors has been ordered into small units within larger divisions. Each division (16 in Volume I, 17 in Volume II) has its own introduction; each author has his own biographical and bibliographical headnote. Volume I starts with the writings of the earliest settlers and ends with poems of Melville; Volume II starts with Longfellow

and concludes with Karl Shapiro. Selections from several novels are included, but the drama is completely excluded. One-third of Volume II is delegated to the twentieth century. Each volume has its own index of authors, titles, and first lines of poems.

MASTERWORKS OF WORLD LITERATURE. Revised Edition. Edited by Edwin M. Everett, Calvin S. Brown, and John D. Wade. Dryden Press. 2 Vols. Vol. I, pp. 1000; Vol. II, pp. 958. Each \$4.75.

The general approach is that of the "great books" plan of teaching world literature. Volume I covers the period from Homer to Cervantes; Volume II, from Shakespeare to Thomas Mann. Each volume contains the English text of about fifteen "masterworks," in whole or in part. The complete text of nine plays is included and extensive selections from about twenty other writers of the Western World, as well as extracts from saga literature, ballads, etc. Space is about equally divided between Greek and Roman Classics, The Middle Ages, The Renaissance in Europe, The Renaissance in England, Neo-Classicism, and Romanticism and the Modern World. Authors include Homer, Virgil, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Plato, Plutarch, Chaucer, Dante, Rabelais, Montaigne, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Milton, Moliere, Racine, Swift, Voltaire, Rousseau, Goethe, Tolstoy, Ibsen, and Mann. Well printed on good paper.

OUTLINE OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE FROM DANTE ALIGHIERI TO EUGENE O'NEIL. By Werner P. Friederich with the collaboration of David Henry Malone. University of North Carolina Press. Pp. 451. \$6.00. Half-bound.

The purpose of the authors both in arrangement and explication of material has been "to underscore modern man's lasting indebtedness to the various national, racial, and social strains of Europe." Thus, the "outline" has been arranged by periods—The Classical Revival, The Renaissance,

The Baroque, Classicism and Enlightenment, Pre-Romanticism, Romanticism, and Realism-Symbolism. The discussion of each period starts with general observations, proceeds to the most notable contributions of a single country during that period, and finally advances to a discussion of the interrelationships of other literatures during the same period. The frame of reference is vast; the information solidly packed.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH POETRY. Edited by Norman E. McClure. **SIXTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH PROSE.** Edited by Karl J. Holznecht. Pp. 623. Harper. Each \$6.00.

The first pair of volumes in the new Harper English Literature Series which will make available representative volumes of prose and poetry for each century from the sixteenth to the twentieth. Each volume has an interpretative and evaluative introduction; the texts are taken from the original manuscripts or the best early editions; the works of both major and minor writers are included; the arrangement is roughly chronological by author; each author is introduced with a biographical and critical headnote. More than thirty poets are represented by their nondramatic verse, and more than forty writers by their prose. The selections are complete, or are substantial units in themselves. Footnotes are chiefly glossarial. Clearly printed in reasonably handy sized volumes, which may be used singly or together.

THE RENAISSANCE IN ENGLAND. Non-dramatic Prose and Verse of the Sixteenth Century. Edited by Hyder E. Rollins and Herschel Baker. Heath. Pp. 1014. \$7.50. Double columned. 8" by 11".

A comprehensive anthology with generous samplings from the works of about 125 authors. The contents are grouped as follows: The Historical Setting; Early Tudor Literature; The Reformation in England; Poetical Miscellanies, Ballads, and Songbooks; Early Elizabethan Poetry; Translations; Prose Fiction; Miscellaneous Prose. Introductory notes preface the selections from each author. Texts are scrupulously edited. Two very full glossaries (80 pages) substitute for footnotes: one defines or identifies all the English words and phrases the

meaning or orthography of which may pose difficulties for the student; the other supplies explanations of all proper nouns and translations of foreign words and phrases.

THE INFORMAL READER. A College Anthology. Edited by T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel. Appleton-Century-Crofts. Pp. 743. \$4.50.

A freshman English anthology which aims, above all, to interest students in good writing. The selections vary in difficulty, but none stoops to the dawdling student. Contents are arranged by types: nonfiction (295 pp.); fiction (230 pp.); poetry (120 pp.); drama (76 pp.). Nonfiction ranges from Lincoln Dryden's "How to Drive a Car" to Bertrand Russell's "The Future of Mankind"; fiction, from Thurber to Tolstoy; poetry from Oscar Hammerstein, II to William Shakespeare. The sole representative of the drama is Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Attractively printed on good paper and of a carryable weight.

NEW HIGHWAYS IN COLLEGE COMPOSITION. Second Edition. By Oscar Cargill, Homer Watt, Reginald Call and William Charvat. Prentice-Hall. Pp. 1034. \$6.75. Double columned. 7" x 10".

This textbook is "the legitimate descendant of the first three-way text" published in 1930. Like the earlier edition, it is a combination reader, rhetoric, and handbook. The "reader" has an introductory section (50 pp.) on rapid and critical reading, with a work program for improving reading skills; the major portion (679 pp.) contains a wide variety of selections for reading: poems (Shakespeare to Auden); short stories, nonfiction, and the full text of three plays (*A Phoenix Too Frequent*, *Ah, Wilderness*, *Death of a Salesman*). The rhetoric (190 pp.) includes two unique chapters on "The Objective Method" and "Writing for Other Courses." The handbook (90 pp.) concentrates on errors actually made by college freshmen. The standard supported is that of natural, semi-formal English.

MODERN TECHNICAL WRITING. By Theodore A. Sherman. Prentice-Hall. Pp. 424. \$4.75.

The contents are sensibly organized into

four main parts: the general problems of technical writing; reports; business correspondence; and a usage handbook. Exercises are numerous, as are suggestive writing assignments. Specimen working-level reports have been provided by many types of industries. An appendix includes useful lists of abbreviations for scientific and engineering terms and of useful publications for technical writers.

MODERN BUSINESS ENGLISH. Fifth Edition. By *A. Charles Babenroth and Charles Chandler Parkhurst*. Prentice-Hall. Pp. 647. \$4.76.

This edition has been revised to stress the influence of effective communication upon good human relations. The contents include:

Part I, Fundamentals of Communication (100 pp.); Part II, Types of Business Communication (290 pp.); Part III, Reference Section (251 pp.) is a usage handbook.

EFFECTIVE SPEAKING IN BUSINESS. Revised. By *Alfred D. Huston, Robert A. Sandberg, and Jack Mills*. Prentice-Hall. Pp. 329. \$6.35.

The revised edition of the volume originally entitled *Everyday Business Speech*. The basic line of approach—conversational skills, business conference, public speaking—has been retained. New model speeches have been added, also an extremely usable section on parliamentary procedure with the various motions classified as to type then discussed separately. Illustrated.

Nonfiction

LETTERS OF W. B. YEATS. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by *Alan Wade*. Macmillan. \$9.50.

A gem of a volume, scrupulously edited without a trace of pedantry. Yeats' letters, 1887-1939, cover almost all of his adult working life. They fall naturally into six periods corresponding with major shifts and changes in his many interests and activities. For each period Mr. Wade has provided an admirable introduction to give perspective and to fill the lacunae, of which there are fewer than might be expected since many letters are included here which have not been published before. Yeats was less reserved in his letters than in his conversation, and to the several special friends—among these Olivia Shakespeare, Florence Farr, Maude Gonne, and Lady Gregory—with whom he corresponded frequently, he communicated in detail. The result is at once a multi-faceted self-portrait and an authentic guide to the poet behind the masque.

ENDEAVORS OF ART: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama. By *Mabel Doran*. University of Wisconsin Press. Pp. 482. \$6.00.

A fascinating study (the author calls it an essay in historical criticism) in which are examined the problems of form which Shakespeare and other Elizabethan dramatists had to face and solve. Miss Doran is

chiefly interested in the significant *ideas* which helped to shape Elizabethan drama, particularly those from European critical sources, although the more familiar English materials are also analyzed. What she has tried to do has been to draw a clearer picture than we have previously had of the frame of artistic reference within which the practicing dramatists worked. This she has accomplished, although the picture is by no means definitive, and she has also opened up many fresh views which tease for exploration.

ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY: Excluding the Drama. By *C. S. Lewis*. Oxford. Pp. 696. \$7.00.

The reader familiar with Professor Lewis's essays and novels will find here also, wit, felicity of style, a sympathy with Anglo-Catholicism, and vigorous, highly individualistic opinions which occasionally verge on the opinionate. He discusses first the "new learning and the new ignorance" at the close of the Middle Ages in England and Scotland, then goes on to what he calls the "Drab Age" and the prose and poetry of religious controversy. These dispatched, he devotes the greater half of the book to the writers of the "Golden Period" upon many of whom he expends keen and affectionate insight. However, Lewis has considerable

antipathy for the humanists and, for example, demolishes completely More's *Utopia*. Not a conventional literary history!

THE TRAGEDIES OF GEORGE CHAPMAN: Renaissance Ethics in Action. By Ennis Rees. Harvard University Press. Pp. 223. \$4.50.

The author, contrary to the orthodox view of Chapman as a champion of romantic individualism, interprets the plays for what he thinks they were meant to be, "poetic dramas of unusual quality in which a very definite ethical intention is realized to an unusual degree." He first analyzes Chapman's nondramatic work to show his Christian-humanistic bent, and then reinterprets the tragedies to that point.

THE MASKS OF JONATHAN SWIFT. By William Bragg Ewald, Jr. Harvard University Press. Pp. 203. \$4.50.

Swift frequently hid behind a mask in his writings—Drapier, Bickerstaff, Gulliver. Why did he adopt this device? Ewald has attempted to get behind the mask, to portraitize each of the various fictitious "authors" of Swift's works, and to determine how close a relation each has to Swift, the man. He demonstrates that Swift stands apart from these personae, but that each reflects a facet of his personality. To get to the substance of a work by Swift, "one must hear the voice through the mask."

ORTHODOXY IN PARADISE LOST. By Sr. Miriam Joseph, C.S.C., St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana, Pp. 42.

In spite of Milton's avowal of the Arian heresy in his prose and his strong opposition to the Catholic church, Sr. Miriam Joseph quotes a multitude of passages from *Paradise Lost* to show that the Catholic reading it finds harmony with his own doctrines.

HOWELLS AND THE AGE OF REALISM. By Everett Carter. Lippincott. \$5.00.

Carter undertakes to demonstrate that Howells' literary importance is much greater than most critics' neglect of him suggests. Howells was both an evidence of and a strong factor in the rise of realism in the 80's and 90's. He admired but did not sympathize with the Hawthorne-Melville ro-

manticism that sought human truth in unreal situations. He first—briefly—wrote in the sentimental fashion of 1860, but the Brahmin influence of Lowell *et al.* and especially T. W. Higginson's essays cured him. Disliking extremes, he used realistic settings and events as well as characters. Carter writes with admiration, almost affection, of Howells' and with confident decisiveness concerning other prominent figures. This is unusually engaging criticism.

THOREAU: A CENTURY OF CRITICISM. Edited by Walter F. Harding. Southern Methodist University Press. Pp. 205. \$3.75.

The editor says in his two-page "Introduction" that critical opinion of Thoreau has always been sharply divided, with more censure at first, then neglect, and since the '90's increasing praise. He blames Emerson's funeral sermon for setting the general conception of Thoreau as a harsh stoic. The selections seem to fit this conception of the historical development. Regardless of this thesis, the book is a good stimulant to reading Thoreau, or to reflection if one is already reading.

LEAVES OF GRASS ONE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER. Edited by Milton Hindus. Stanford University Press. Pp. 149. \$5.00.

Contributors: Hindus, W. C. Williams, Richard Chase, Leslie A. Fiedler, Kenneth Burke, David Daiches, and J. Middleton Murry. Williams and Burke consider Whitman's language, Chase and Fiedler through biography and literary history search for the essential of his mind and illumination. Murray writes appreciatively of Whitman's democracy.

THE RUNGLASS LADDER: Harriet Beecher Stowe and New England Puritanism. By Charles H. Foster. Duke University Press. \$4.50.

Foster regrets that most American readers *almost* know Mrs. Stowe's work; we know about the effect of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but general impressions are really based more upon the stage version and the objectionable Tom Shows than upon the novel; and her later novels, which are skillful analyses of the psychology of New Englanders are unknown to the majority. He makes

a case strong enough to deserve consideration.

THE STRENUOUS AGE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE. By *Grant C. Knight*. North Carolina Press. \$4.50.

Knight feels that American literature of the first decade of our century has been unduly deprecated or slighted by critics and literary historians. Here he gives an encyclopedic account of it.

LANGUAGE, MEANING AND MATURITY. Edited by *S. I. Hayakawa*. Harper. \$4.00.

This volume presents the articles published from 1943 to 1953 in *Etc.: A Review of General Semantics* which its editor thinks of greatest lasting importance. Uneven, of course, but it is readable by the uninitiated, and some of the papers like Wendell Johnson's "You Can't Write Writing" and Weller Embler's "Metaphor and Social Belief" and Clifton Utley's "Can a Radio Commentator Talk Sense?" are valuable apart from nonaristotelian semantics.

CONCISE DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN GRAMMAR AND USAGE. Edited by *R. C. Whitford* and *J. R. Foster*. Philosophical Library. Pp. 168. \$4.50.

This "combined handbook of diction, grammar, and rhetoric" is an alphabetical list of definitions, ratings of words or expressions as slang, colloquial, vulgar, or standard literary; and items of advice about style. Rather liberal, but unpredictable, in ratings of usage; traditional in grammatical terminology.

THE PROCESS AND EFFECTS OF MASS COMMUNICATION. Edited by *Wilbur Schramm*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana. Pp. 586. \$6.00.

This group of readings, organized with necessary connecting sections into a treatise, was originally background material for training government employees concerned with international mass media. It has, however, been used successfully in university classes in mass communication.

THE SUSQUEHANNA. By *Carl Carmer*. "Rivers of America." Rinehart. \$5.00.

In 1608 a "small short-masted open barge" with thirteen men aboard under the command of Captain John Smith explored along inlet and bay near a river's mouth along whose shores lived the Indian tribe Susquehannocks. After intensive research, Carl Carmer has written a rich and colorful history of the river as it winds through New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

NOW IS THE TIME. By *Lillian Smith*. Viking. \$2.00.

The author of *Strange Fruit* is a Southerner by birth who has dedicated her life to arousing the South and our country to the injustices suffered by the Negro race. Some of the chapters in this plea for action now are "Segregation," "The Supreme Court Decision," "The Eyes of Asia Upon Us," "Intermarriage," and "Communism."

THE RED CARPET: 10,000 Miles through Russia on a Visa from Krushchev. By *Marshall MacDuffie*. Norton. \$4.50.

The author as head of the U.N.R.R.A. in the Ukraine had known Krushchev, who granted him permission to visit eight republics of the Soviet Union. He visited all sorts of people freely (almost) and spent sixty-five days in Russia. He found too much Communism, a dislike of America but a strong hope for peace. This may be due to propaganda, which insists, "The Soviet Union has never attacked any other nation." MacDuffie liked the Russian people.

Poetry Fiction

COLLECTED POEMS OF EDITH SITWELL. By *Edith Sitwell*. Vanguard. \$5.00.

By its completeness and chronological arrangement this distinguished volume provides an excellent picture of Miss Sitwell's growth in poetic power. The early poems

include many which have not been published here before; another section includes the whole of the controversial "Façade," which Miss Sitwell describes as "patterns in sound and a virtuoso exercise in technique." The central sections contain the poems of four previously published volumes. The composi-

tion of her post war poems was greatly influenced by the shock of Hiroshima, "which," she says, "has taken a third place beside Heaven and Hell." It is in these that Miss Sitwell achieves a notable integration of compassion, humor, integrity, and vision. The prose preface, "Some Notes on My Own Poetry," is a lucid explanation and demonstration of one contemporary poet's methods of dealing with the problems of form and meaning.

SELECTED POEMS. By *Mark Van Doren*. Holt. Pp. 238. \$5.00.

Van Doren's production has been so copious that a complete collection would be formidable. So he has selected from the nine original volumes, chiefly according to his own feeling but also somewhat according to the approval of others. Arranged chronologically, they begin with very simple nature poems and move on through love to contemplation of humanity and the cosmos; the progress of the poet's experience and mind are clearly exhibited. The verse forms are various and skillful.

JOHN BROWN'S BODY. By *Stephen Vincent Benet*. Illustrated by *Fritz Kredel* and *Warren Chappell*. Rinehart. \$5.00.

This deluxe edition, large folio size, has the running head in a decorative scroll in the wide margin of each page, a dozen drawings by Kredel as headpieces for the "books" of the poem, and line-drawing portraits of John Brown, Davis, Lee, and Grant by Chappell.

BURNS INTO ENGLISH: Renderings of Select Dialect Poems of Robert Burns. By *William Kean Seymour*. Philosophical Library. Pp. 160. \$3.75.

These have the virtue of readability by the American without a glossary. They have the usual defects of translation: partial loss of the word music and occasional inexact transfer of lexical meanings—e.g. Tam is planted "squarely right" for "unco right."

HOMER'S DAUGHTER. By *Robert Graves*. Doubleday. \$3.95.

Graves believes that the *Odyssey* was written 150 years after the *Iliad*—in Sicily, by a woman who pictured herself as Nausicaa. So Graves has her tell Homer's story, and claim him as an ancestor. Her

father, King Alpheides, has gone to search for his missing son. The palace is besieged by a horde of unworthy suitors. Saved from a wrecked vessel, a Cretan, Aethon, appeared on the beach and romance blossoms quickly. A colorful picture of life in legendary times.

SINCERELY, WILLIS WAYDE. By *John P. Marquand*. Little, Brown. \$3.95.

Willis was fifteen when in 1922 his father, a Westerner, accepted a position in Massachusetts as engineer in the Harcourt Mill. This is the story of Willis's life: how he became a rich, successful man. The Harcourts were aristocrats with inherited money. Is there a difference? A shrewd social study of an "upper class," and a "middle class" struggling upward. Many characters, many interesting situations. Stress is laid upon loyalty and integrity (not much romance)—in both classes.

THE GOLDEN ARGOSY: A COLLECTION OF THE MOST CELEBRATED SHORT STORIES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. Edited by *Van H. Cartmell* and *Charles Grayson*. Dial Press. \$6.00.

Many of these forty short stories have been popular for a century; others are more recent, by living authors. The book opens with "I'm a Fool," Sherwood Anderson. Bierce, Conrad, Conan Doyle, Poe, and Mark Twain are represented, as are Faulkner, Hemingway, Steinbeck, and others of today. An excellent library book.

THE BEST FROM FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. Fourth Series. Edited by *Anthony Boucher*. Doubleday. \$3.50.

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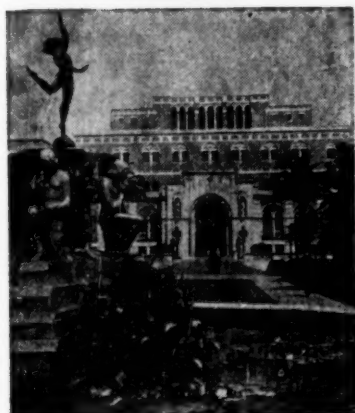
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